



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, January 30, 2012**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 30, 2012

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

### NATIONAL FLAG OF CANADA

The House resumed from November 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-288, An Act respecting the National Flag of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate Bill C-288, which would ensure that each and every Canadian has the right to fly Canada's national flag.

Every day, Canadians are tightening their belts to make ends meet. Every month, thousands of people are losing their jobs. Economic uncertainty lingers. For months now, thousands of people have been forced to wait for their employment insurance payments, not knowing when they will finally get help. Yet the first thing this government wants to debate is the right to fly the maple leaf proudly.

Honestly, I never thought I would have to stand up in the House to remind my colleagues that protecting Canadians' right to fly a flag on their property is not even close to a priority for our fellow citizens.

Does the member for Don Valley West really believe that people have expressed an urgent need for this kind of bill?

I agree with my colleague that Canadians have the right to fly our national flag proudly. Canada is a wonderful country that, until the Conservatives came to power, had an enviable reputation around the world. For many citizens, flying the maple leaf demonstrates their pride and their attachment to our country.

People have the right to express their patriotism by proudly waving Canada's national flag at home. Is it really necessary to adopt new legislation for that?

Do we really need to impose fines and even prison sentences on people whose level of patriotism is not to the government's liking?

Canadians want parliamentarians to debate and legislate issues that matter, like the economy, health care and the environment.

Over the past few months, I have had the opportunity to talk with the people of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier about issues that matter to them. They told me how angry and disappointed they are in this government's decision to withdraw from the Kyoto protocol and instead focus on developing the oil industry at the expense of the environment.

Families in Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier who are struggling to make ends meet are worried about the cost of living, which is increasing rapidly under this government's disinterested watch.

Every day, more and more people are calling my office in distress because they have to wait for months to receive their employment insurance cheque, when they need help right now.

To date, absolutely no one has raised the pressing need to introduce legislation to protect the rights of every citizen to fly the Canadian flag without restriction.

People do not want this government to waste time debating an issue that does not even present a real problem. Until now, Canadians have managed to self-regulate when it comes to expressing their patriotism. There is nothing to suggest that this will change.

Legal provisions to protect individual freedom of expression already exist. The most important of these provisions, with which we are all familiar, is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Subsection 2(b) of the charter guarantees every individual the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression.

Anyone whose freedom to express pride for their country is violated or who is banned from flying the Canadian flag can invoke the charter at any time.

Why introduce new legislation that would impose prison sentences on the offenders, when the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms already provides citizens with enough protection?

Canadians have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms because respecting the right of every individual to freely express their ideas without repression is part of our fundamental values.

It worries me that, with Bill C-288, this government is prepared to implement repressive measures targeted directly at anyone who expresses an opinion that goes against the artificial patriotism the Conservatives are trying to force on Canadians.

*Private Members' Business*

I would also remind the House that there are certain situations in which individuals might need to ask someone to remove a Canadian flag for purely pragmatic reasons or as a result of security issues, for example, the local fire department.

Should these individuals be treated like criminals and punished for doing their job? That does not make any sense. This bill does not meet any real needs of Canadians. Instead, it appears to be an attempt by the member for Don Valley West to score a few political points based on a few isolated incidents.

• (1110)

The fact that a few overzealous landlords forced some people to remove their Canadian flags from their balconies should not become a national issue. This attempt to legislate patriotism and to lock up any offenders is nothing more than another way for the Conservatives to push their ideology one step further.

Although most Canadians are happy to pay tribute to the national flag and celebrate their patriotism, they are concerned about the negative effects of this bill. They do not want this government to treat them like criminals for doing their job or for having a misunderstanding with their neighbours.

Imposing punitive measures—whether they consist of an injunction, a fine, or even worse, imprisonment—is far from a perfect solution. It is high time for this government to give up on this useless bill. We should instead be focusing on issues that are far more important to Canadians, like job creation and the environment.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that we come back after a recess in December and here we are on day one, hour one, and the government's agenda is about the Canadian flag and members applaud.

Over the last number of weeks those members, like the members of the Liberal Party, have had the opportunity to go out and meet with Canadians and see what the average Canadian has to say. I can honestly say that throughout the last six weeks I have not heard one Canadian say to me, "I want the right to be able to fly my flag". I would suggest that is something most Canadians believe they have the right to do today.

I love the Canadian flag. I believe in flying the Canadian flag. However, I can say that, whether it was yesterday when I was over at St. Mary The Protectress Villa, or when I was at the local McDonald's on Keewatin Street on Saturday, or when I was at the Aklan Fiesta on Saturday night, the issues Canadians were talking about did not include the Canadian flag. They were talking about what was happening with respect to the announcement by the Prime Minister regarding seniors' pensions. At a time when seniors across our land want to hear and be reassured about the issue of pensions, we have a government that is talking about giving a guarantee that every Canadian has the right to fly the flag.

If we raise those issues with seniors and all Canadians, we will find they are more concerned with the hidden agenda coming from this Conservative reform party's approach to dealing—

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, could you confirm for me that the order of the day is private members'

business? Is that not the order of the day every Monday starting at 11 o'clock and that government business does not start until noon? Is that not correct based on the orders of the day, and that it is appropriate to discuss a private member's bill at this hour?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. I am not sure that is a point of order. Individual members can make themselves familiar with what is before the House.

Resuming debate on private member's Bill C-288, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I advise the member that we have a government-sponsored private member's bill before us. If the government really wanted to be in tune with what Canadians want debated inside this chamber, it would find full co-operation from within the Liberal Party to allow debate on those issues today inside this chamber, as opposed to talking about the Canadian flag. It is not because we have disrespect for the flag. We respect the flag. In fact, it was a Liberal administration that brought in the Canadian flag we have today.

However, there is a time and place for everything. I am suggesting that today is not the right time and this is not the right place to be talking about the Canadian flag, as much as we all love it.

We should be talking about the issues that are having an impact on all Canadians. On the minds of Canadians today is the issue of pensions and what the government is threatening to do with regard to the pension issue. That is what we should be talking about in the chamber today.

We just had a six week recess. During breaks, we are expected to go out and talk with our constituents. We should therefore be reflecting what is on their minds.

That is why I speak to the pension issue. I believe it is on the minds of my constituents, in particular the constituents I met over the weekend. Just yesterday, I sat down with residents at the St. Mary The Protectress Villa, a wonderful Ukrainian seniors' complex. They brought up the issue of pensions and asked if I would raise that issue today inside the House of Commons. I feel I should stand up and recognize what I believe is an important issue for all Canadians.

It is not to say that Canadians do not have the right to fly the flag. I appreciate the member's attempt to bring in a bill of this nature, but I think there would be a better opportunity in the future to debate the pros and the cons of the member's bill. I feel we should use the time today, instead of talking about the Canadian flag, to share important issues with Canadians through the House of Commons.

Last session the Liberal Party said it was all about jobs. We want jobs, jobs, jobs. That is priority number one, two and three. We emphasized that before the recess, because we believed that we were reflecting what was on the minds of Canadians and what Canadians were concerned about.

As we wound down the session, we all knew what was happening on the aboriginal file, Attawapiskat and related issues. They were not just limited to the province of Ontario. There are many, many issues related to our reserves, like adequate housing, adequate supply of water and so forth. Those are the types of issues Canadians expect us to be debating today, not whether they have the right to fly the Canadian flag. I believe that most, if not all, Canadians already believe they have the right to fly the Canadian flag.

Canadians want to hear about the issues I already highlighted. They want to hear about health care and the need for us to develop a health care accord that ensures there is a standard of health care delivery from coast to coast. They want to hear that the government is concerned about providing leadership on the health care file.

Over the weekend and in the last 10 days, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism talked about reforms or changes to the immigration file. We have seen some of the damage that minister has done to that file, in particular the freezing of immigration visas for parents of immigrants. The government says it does not want to allow immigration for the parents of immigrants for the next two years.

Now we hear about other ways in which the government is moving forward on immigration reform: the super visa, better known lately as the super disappointment visa.

• (1115)

Those are the issues that affect people every day and those are the issues that we should be debating today. After the Speaker leads the prayer, the first thing on the agenda is that everyone has the right to fly the Canadian flag. I chose to stand today to tell the Prime Minister and the government that their priorities are all wrong. They need to readjust their priorities and start connecting with Canadians, reaching out and getting a better understanding of reality.

The best example of that, which I suspect we will see more of during the day, will be the debate on seniors' pensions. I do not believe we should be moving in the direction in which the government is suggesting.

I support our Canadian flag and always have. On numerous occasions, I have had the opportunity to fly it and promote it. I have done that in the past and will continue to do that well into the future. I am a proud Canadian and a proud nationalist. I believe in a strong national government that provides good quality, national programs such as pensions, health care and leadership on important issues, including immigration, housing and so forth.

• (1120)

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome members back to Parliament after a break. It has been six weeks since we have been here.

The member for Don Valley West, who put forward this private member's bill, has been waiting a long time for it to be heard in this Parliament so we can send it to committee where it can be reviewed, maybe amended, returned to the House and passed. It is a proud day in Parliament when I can stand and speak in favour of Canada's flag.

### *Private Members' Business*

I would first like to talk a bit about private members' business after listening to the diatribe by the member opposite about what we should be talking about and when we should be talking about it. There is never a bad time to talk about how great this nation is and the symbols that represent this nation. We live in a great nation. The member across the way may not agree but it is never a bad time to talk about what a great nation we have and the symbols, like the Canadian flag, that make us a great nation.

The member for Don Valley West has put forward a tremendous bill that may need some small revisions and some changes when it gets to committee. I will promote today why we should send this good bill to committee and why we ask all members across the way to pass it.

The member, his constituents and many Canadians have been waiting for us to pass legislation that would ensure that we protect the valuable symbols of this country, symbols like the Canadian flag, symbols that represent the unity of this nation from coast to coast. Unlike my friend across the way, I stand in support of the member for Don Valley West and I stand in support of Bill C-288. This is the proper time to talk about a flag that represents this great nation.

I rise today to provide additional comments in addressing Bill C-288, an act that encourages the flying of our national flag in every part of our beautiful country.

Last month we had the opportunity to hear comments from many members of Parliament on this legislation that was introduced on September 27, 2011. This opportunity is again being offered to us today and I am pleased to be able to express my support for a bill that encourages all Canadians to fly the national flag, not only where they live but everywhere across the country. Canadians are proud of their flag and they should be able to display it not only on special days, like Canada Day or Flag Day, but each and every day of the year.

I support my colleague from Don Valley West who introduced the bill. I would like to ask all members of Parliament to vote in favour of it.

We agree with some of the proposals that would result in amendments to the bill. We want to encourage condominium corporations, homeowner associations, landlords or others who may have control over shared property to make a provision to allow for the display of the national flag of Canada on their property.

We agree with many modifications that will simply encourage Canadians to proudly display the national flag. The prohibition as it was first included in the bill could also be reviewed. The intent of the bill is still valid and we should let the committee study the bill further to make any necessary amendments.

I would remind everyone sitting in the House today that our flag belongs to all Canadians. It is an emblem we all share.

*Private Members' Business*

We will remember that it was in 1964 that a Senate and House of Commons committee was formed to respond to the government's wish to adopt a distinctive national Canadian flag. The colours of our national flag are based on a strong sense of Canadian history, the combination of red, white and then red first appeared on the General Service Medal issued by Queen Victoria. Red and white were subsequently proclaimed as Canada's national colours by King George V in 1921. The single red maple leaf on a white field is similar to the device worn by all Canadian Olympic athletes since 1904.

The committee eventually decided to recommend the single leaf design, which was approved by a resolution of the House of Commons on December 15, 1964. This was followed by the Senate on December 17, 1964, and proclaimed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada. This was to take effect on February 15, 1965. On that day, a new Canadian flag was raised for the first time on Parliament Hill and at embassies and consulates across the world.

Everyone will remember the following words that were spoken on that momentous day by the Speaker of the Senate, adding further symbolic meaning to our flag:

The flag is the symbol of the nation's unity, for it, beyond any doubt, represents all the citizens of Canada without distinction of race, language, belief or opinion.

The Canadian flag represents the principles of freedom, democracy, courage and justice upon which our great nation is based.

On the day that the maple leaf flag was first raised over Parliament Hill, the prime minister of the day addressed the audience and stated:

—this day, the 15th day of February, 1965, will always be remembered as a milestone in Canada's national progress.

• (1125)

For almost half a century our flag has watched over us as we have grown, matured and prospered. It welcomed the world to our 100th birthday and Expo '67. It followed Terry Fox on his Marathon of Hope. It beckoned our friends the world over to join us in Expo '86 and the Calgary Olympics, and it proudly presided over our 125th birthday in 1992.

It flew with graceful optimism as we embarked on a new millennium. Day after day it still reminds us of a tolerant, peaceful and blessed people who represent this country.

We witnessed Clara Hughes, Canada's Olympic flag bearer, carrying our national flag at the opening of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, accompanied by the top athletes in our country and, in fact, many of the top athletes in the world.

Team Canada: I am sure this proud moment in our country's history is something that we will always remember, as will Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is red and white in honour of Canada's official colours. It displays a single red maple leaf that is a national symbol, a traditional emblem of this nation. A maple leaf is a familiar symbol of our vast and beautiful country that reflects our common values and our sense of community.

In 1867, Alexander Muir composed the song, *The Maple Leaf Forever*, to express his profound roots to the maple leaf in Canadian history.

Considered by flag experts as one of the world's most recognizable flags based on its simple design and limited number of colours, the national flag of Canada is admired by people in every corner of the world as a symbol of freedom and a symbol of democracy. Its clean bold lines speak to our shared values, our sense of common purpose and our sense of national community.

Although simple in design, Canada's flag well reflects the common values we hold so dear, while, at the same time, in its striking simplicity, the Canadian flag speaks to the exciting challenges and huge opportunities our nation possesses for the future. It represents all that we have accomplished together and the moments that have served to define us as a nation and as a people.

Today, 46 years later, the maple leaf flag is recognized and respected worldwide.

The Canadian flag demonstrates the common values so dear to our hearts: freedom, peace, respect, justice and tolerance. It is a familiar sight in towns and cities across this vast and beautiful land. It flies from coast to coast to coast, from the beautiful north to the valleys and mountains of British Columbia and the coves of Atlantic Canada.

The maple leaf pays homage to our geography, reflects the grandeur of our history and represents our national identity. Silently, it speaks for all the citizens of Canada, regardless of their language, beliefs, race or opinions.

The Canadian flag is a symbol that unites the Canadian population and expresses, everywhere in the world and everywhere in Canada, the pride we have of being Canadian. The national flag can be seen in our embassies and missions abroad and it is unmistakable in Afghanistan where Canadian soldiers have made enormous sacrifices to secure peace and safeguard the Afghan people.

Our flag is a peaceful and prominent symbol in Canada and around the world. In the international community, it symbolizes freedom to express distinct cultural perspectives and is a sign of openness and accommodation. Our flag is the symbol beyond all others that brings Canadians together. Not only does it represent our free, compassionate and caring society, it also represents each and every citizen and their pride in seeing it fly in the vast Canadian skies.

We have a lot to be proud of in this country and the flag symbolizes this to us and the world about what is best about Canada. It speaks to tolerance, mutual respect, compassion and acceptance. These are deeply ingrained values in the Canadian character.

It is a reflection of us all and is a reflection of a belief that we all need to celebrate. The flag is an important part of our national identity. We fly it on flagpoles, sew it on backpacks and put decals on our cars and bicycles and, whenever we do, we send a message of pride and unity to our friends and neighbours across Canada and across the world.

*Private Members' Business*

The Government of Canada is proud to celebrate each year, on February 15, National Flag Day. It is an excellent opportunity to learn about and reflect on our shared heritage and express our collective identity. On that day across the country there are literally thousands of events celebrating National Flag Day.

In my riding of Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley there is a big event in a place called Parrsboro, an area with the highest tides in the world, an area where tidal power will engage and grow that community. The people in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia, celebrate flag day every year. They are patriotic. They believe in Canada and Canada's unity. On their behalf, I stand today in support of Bill C-288 and the member for Don Valley West. I encourage members opposite to support the bill and send it to committee.

● (1130)

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak to Bill C-288, An Act respecting the National Flag of Canada.

I read this bill with interest over the weekend and noticed there are really three key clauses in it. The first is, of course, to prohibit or stop people from preventing other folks from displaying the national flag of Canada; the second is to allow the courts to grant injunctions against violators or potential violators of the first clause; and the third, if this injunction is ignored, allows prison sentences of up to two years for violators.

I am lucky that my wife, Jeanette Ashe, is also a political scientist. She puts up with these kinds of discussions over the weekends about these important private members' issues that come forward. We thought, as we were walking by the Peace Tower last night, looking at the Canadian flag billowing over this magnificent Parliament, that the bill was extraordinary for a number of reasons and worth discussing at length. I am glad we have the time today to do so.

First, I would like to state that I am very proud of the Canadian flag. I have worn it on my backpack while hostelling through Europe. As I stayed at various hostels, people would stop me, at least they did in the 1990s, and say how happy they were to meet a Canadian, as identified by my flag. They would say that Canada was a symbol of all that was good in the world. We have very strong national health care. We welcome immigrants. We are a peace-keeping nation. We try to promote peace internationally. I think that is why I was proud to wear the flag then. I am happy that people are proud to fly it on their own houses and to wear it on their backpacks around the world.

However, as much as I do support the flag and flag-flying, I really cannot support the bill in its current form. There are number of reasons for this. The first is the cost of this bill. I think as a responsible opposition, one of the first things we have to do is to speak about costs and think about being in a deficit position. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have brought us into a deficit position. We have to think about every penny and think about spending our pennies wisely.

To throw somebody in prison for two years would cost about \$200,000. It costs about \$100,000 a year to put somebody in prison. That does not even include all of the prosecution fees, all the police fees, and the various other fees that are entailed. There are about 12.5 million households in Canada. At a cost of about a dollar a flag, we

could actually provide a flag to every Canadian household for the cost of about 65 prosecutions. I thought, is it worth it?

I read the member for Don Valley West's speech in *Hansard*. Actually, my wife and I perused *Hansard* as I was getting ready for this speech. He brought this bill forward based on a few bits of anecdotal evidence from his constituents; for example, a renter of an apartment flew a flag and the landlord forced him to take it down. What would be the implications of this act, this extraordinary act? At the furthest extent, that landlord would be put into jail for two years. Is that really the right way to handle this type of dispute, to allow the Attorney General of Canada, through the superior courts, to press charges against a landlord and then take that person out of the economy and put him or her into jail for two years at a cost of at least \$200,000? Perhaps this is not the best way to go forward. Perhaps this is a wasteful use of taxpayer money.

There has been some talk in this House about allowing this bill to get to committee to allow more discussion of these clauses. However, the bill itself is very short and there do not seem to be any clauses to discuss, other than this one to throw people in jail for two years if they somehow interfere with the flying of a flag, or may do so in the future.

● (1135)

There are, in public policy, really two main instruments. They are referred to as carrots and sticks. There is the stick, where people are punished and beaten into submission to elicit a certain type of behaviour, and there are carrots, where people are rewarded for undertaking particular actions. The government seems particularly prone to using the stick. I would propose that a two-year prison sentence for interfering with, removing or intending to remove someone's flag some day is a very big stick. Putting people in jail for two years does not seem to make much sense.

On the cost side of things, if we are going to spend this enormous amount of money on this type of action, it would be much better to supply flags to every household rather than throwing a very small number of people in jail. It would cost millions of dollars. Again, I point out to the member that perhaps this is one reason he should reconsider this bill.

*Private Members' Business*

The second reason the bill should not go forward and why I cannot support it is the thought of who pays. There would be these prosecutions ongoing, during which time the attorney general would perhaps not be pursuing other prosecutions while going after these violent flag offenders. Because it is a sentence of less than two years, it would be served in provincial prisons. This bill seems to continue the theme of the current government of not only using a stick as a policy tool but also not absorbing the costs of using that stick.

This bill could perhaps have been added to Bill C-10, which we all know is the omnibus crime bill that rolled nine pieces of legislation into one larger piece of legislation. Perhaps the most famous clause in Bill C-10 is the one that requires six months for six plants, that is, if someone is caught with six marijuana plants in his or her window box, plants the size of a person's little finger, the mandatory minimum sentence is six months in jail. Of course, the federal government can pass these big stick laws without any fear that it is going to drive up the federal deficit because all of these costs are offloaded to the provinces. The Quebec government was the first one to come out and say that Bill C-10 would cost the province perhaps upwards of \$1 billion. Now other provinces have come out and said this is offloading by the federal government.

Bills like Bill C-10 are going to cost provinces billions of dollars. It is irresponsible for the Conservative government to go ahead with bills like this without any discussion with the provinces and for it to say it is going to impose punitive laws, things that most Canadians would not agree with, and that it is not going to pay for them but make provincial taxpayers do so. Bill C-288 is in the same nature as Bill C-10.

Another forthcoming bill that would also offload costs to provinces concerns health care. The federal government, without really having any discussions with the provinces, is looking to offload health care costs to the provinces. This is a dangerous trend.

The last point I would make is there is very little empirical evidence the bill is needed. Perhaps the member senses there might be an escalation in people tearing down flags because they will be upset with government policy. For me, the only reason people would remove a flag is they are upset with the government. Perhaps the purchase of F-35s, perhaps the government becoming an international scourge in regard to climate change, and perhaps our moving from being a peacekeeping nation to an aggressor nation are reasons that people might be angry with the government. I think maybe this is a Freudian slip type of bill, where the member is perhaps anticipating with great nervousness what damage his government is going to do this country and is trying to get ahead of that problem by introducing such a bill.

I cannot support this bill going forward.

● (1140)

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be here this morning, representing my riding of Davenport in the great city of Toronto where people put up flags just about everywhere. Displaying the Canadian flag in my riding is very important to many of my constituents. In fact, it is a unique event, a unique habit of theirs. They often request the flag from their member of Parliament and on every occasion I am happy to facilitate that request.

This very weighty bill is not about the ability of Canadians to display the flag. It appears to be one step in an endless, escalating direction of the government to criminalize Canadians. I am sure the member opposite who drafted this legislation either did not think about this or this bill is more malicious than it looks on the face of it. We have volunteers who are sitting on condo boards, we have seniors and retirees sitting on tenant associations of the buildings they live in, and this bill requires these volunteers to make a decision whether to uphold the municipal fire regulations or risk being charged under this act for refusing to allow people to hang a flag on their balcony. Where is the fairness and foresight here?

If the government stopped borrowing from the Tea Party in the United States, maybe it would put forward sensible legislation Canadians actually cared about. We all know the government loves to wave the flag when it is convenient for it to do so, and it also loves to say that it cannot do this or that because it is a provincial or a municipal matter. These are the government's great excuses for refusing to acknowledge the desperate need for a national affordable public transit strategy. It claims this is somehow not its jurisdiction. Yet the government puts a piece of legislation before this House that will expect and facilitate Canadians in overreaching municipal bylaws and doing its bidding.

It is hard for me to really understand where this legislation is coming from, other than from the government's friends in the Tea Party. However, there is one other issue that might be at play here, because we know that the government in the face of declining crime rates has said to Canadians, yes, the crime rate is falling but the unreported crime rate is rising. Perhaps in an effort to fill the prisons that the government wants to build, it needs to criminalize more Canadians so it has a purpose for this.

We have serious concerns about how volunteer residents' associations are going to deal with this bill, and the member opposite has not spoken to that at all. The member opposite and his government like to flex their muscles and try to characterize their party as somehow the most patriotic body in the country. This is another example of how the government tries to pit one group against another in an endless toxic debate on who is more Canadian.

Here we all are on the first day back in a new session, costing taxpayers a whack of dough to have us all here, and are invited to talk about a piece of legislation that is not on the radar of Canadians, certainly not in the riding of Davenport or in Toronto where this member also comes from.

● (1145)

Instead of trying to lock up landlords for not allowing a resident association to put up a flag, why not try to put landlords' feet to the fire around the issue of bedbugs in the city of Toronto? That would be something constituents in the member's riding would appreciate.



*Private Members' Business*

If the member wants to overreach municipal jurisdiction and do something meaningful, why not pursue a national affordable housing strategy? That would help a lot of people in the hon. member's riding. I can say that because I get calls from people from all over the city of Toronto who are desperately in need of housing. I come from Scarborough, which is not very far from the hon. member's own riding. That is where I grew up. The houses were a little smaller than they are in Don Valley, but the issues of affordable housing are huge.

The member had a great opportunity to make his mark in the House with his first private member's bill and really connect to the issues concerning the constituents he claims to represent, and what we have is a watered down facsimile of a Tea Party manifesto on flags. This is what the government is about. It should come forward with some meaningful issues.

How can we support this obvious attempt at throwing a wedge issue in the body politic at a time when seniors are concerned about their pensions and middle class families cannot afford mortgages, let alone buy a house in the city of Toronto? That would be an issue for the member to consider.

I know there are some people who have not been able to fly the flag on their balconies. That has happened. However, we have not heard any conversations with respect to fire and safety or municipal bylaws.

There is a municipal bylaw which would be very interesting to change. It is in the building code around making sure that new buildings are accessible to seniors. That would be something on which the member opposite could really get some support, certainly from his Toronto colleague on this side of the House.

Let us see some meaningful private members' bills that really make a difference in the lives of Canadians. Enough of this phony, toxic, partisan bickering at the beginning of a new session.

• (1150)

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I would like to wish you and all of my colleagues a warm welcome back to the House. I hope everyone enjoyed some festive cheer with their family, friends and constituents over the course of the break. I am delighted to have the opportunity to return to the House this morning.

It is also a pleasure to start this new year speaking to private member's Bill C-288, An Act respecting the National Flag of Canada, on behalf of the people of Don Valley West, and for that matter, all of Canada.

I wish to take members back in our shared history. On February 15, 1965, our Canadian flag was raised for the very first time. The Hon. Maurice Bourget beautifully articulated the meaning of the flag and what it represents. He stated:

The flag is the symbol of the nation's unity, for it, beyond any doubt, represents all the citizens of Canada without distinction of race, language, belief or opinion.

These words ring as true today as they did 46 years ago. The flag represents our country's incredible unity from coast to coast to coast, where within these borders people from every corner of the world have the opportunity to etch their place within Canada. Canadians, from recent immigrants to those whose generations past first settled

this land, are united in the essence of what it means to have this citizenship, to take pride in our breathtaking landscapes, to participate in democracy, to practise the faith that speaks to them, and to know that each and every one of us can call ourselves Canadian regardless of what language we speak.

The Canadian flag is a deeply symbolic icon. Its beauty in simplicity has made it an internationally recognized symbol. Citizens, from our Olympians presenting excellence on the world stage to undergraduates who stay in hostels while backpacking their way through faraway lands all proudly display our flag. It symbolizes the very values for which our valiant armed forces risked their lives. These men and women in action have seen first-hand countries where citizens live in fear and dictatorship. For these veterans the flag represents the Canada and our values for which they fought. It is shameful that those who risk their lives in the call of duty are being barred from displaying the flag today.

I thank the member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley and all members in the House who have spoken in support of this very important bill. Bill C-288 acts to ensure that all citizens across all of Canada have the same rights to fly the flag any day of the year. I am proud of our country. I am proud of our flag and all that it represents to our great nation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The time provided for debate has expired. Accordingly, the question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 1, 2012, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

\* \* \*

• (1200)

**MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed Bill S-5, An Act to amend the law governing financial institutions and to provide for related and consequential matters.

*Government Orders*

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The House will now suspend until 12 o'clock when we will move to government orders.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:55 a.m.)

## SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### POOLED REGISTERED PENSION PLANS ACT

**Hon. Ted Menzies (for the Minister of Finance)** moved that Bill C-25, An Act relating to pooled registered pension plans and making related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to open debate on Bill C-25, An Act relating to pooled registered pension plans and making related amendments to other Acts.

As hon. members are aware, our government understands the importance of a secure and dignified retirement for people who have spent their lives building a better and more prosperous Canada for all of us. This legislation would take Canada's retirement income system one step further by helping more Canadians realize their retirement goals.

PRPPs, an acronym people will hear many times over, refers to pooled registered pension plans. I will outline how PRPPs will help millions of Canadians save for their retirement, but first I will provide some context as to why our government is introducing this new low cost and accessible retirement option. Just because Canada's retirement system is strong does not mean it cannot be improved. That is exactly what will happen when the House passes Bill C-25.

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, concerns related to retirement income adequacy and pension coverage began to emerge. In response our government took action and established a joint federal-provincial research working group in May 2009. This working group conducted an in-depth examination of retirement income adequacy in Canada.

The working group concluded that overall the Canadian retirement income system is performing well. It is providing Canadians with an adequate standard of living upon retirement. However, the report also found that some modest and middle income households may be at risk of having insufficient savings once they retire.

Of particular concern is the finding of declining participation in employer-sponsored registered pension plans. The portion of working Canadians with such plans has declined from 41% in 1991. As well, Canadians are not taking full advantage of other retirement savings tools such as registered retirement savings plans. For example, currently there is \$600 billion in unused RRSP room in Canada. While aggregate RPP and RRSP participation rates for middle and higher income earners are quite high, the research

nonetheless indicates that a portion of Canadians is not saving enough.

With these findings in hand, our government went to work on behalf of Canadians. Over the past two years our government's commitment to a stronger retirement system has taken me to every province and territory and countless communities across this country. In my travels I have consulted with Canadians. I have met with our provincial and territorial counterparts. I have held discussions with owners of small and medium size businesses as well as self-employed Canadians. Today's legislation is the culmination of these consultations.

In short, PRPPs are an innovative, new, privately administered low cost and accessible pension option to help Canadians meet their retirement goals. They are particularly significant for small and medium size businesses. They will enable owners and employees alike to have access to a large-scale, low cost private pension plan for the very first time.

Professional administrators will be subject to a fiduciary standard of care to ensure that funds are invested in the best interests of the plan members. By pooling pension savings, PRPPs will offer Canadians greater purchasing power. Basically, Canadians will be buying in bulk. Achieving lower prices than would otherwise be available means Canadians would have more money left in their pockets when they retire. The design of these plans will also be straightforward to allow for simple enrolment and simple management. Finally, they are intended to be a largely harmonized process from province to province, which will further lower the administrative costs.

● (1205)

Overall the design features will remove many of the traditional barriers that might have kept some employers from offering pension plans to their employees. It is my firm belief that this will lead to a greater willingness for small and medium-size businesses to offer PRPPs to their employees. That is crucial because, incredibly, just over 60% of Canadians do not have a workplace pension plan to date.

With PRPPs, participation will be encouraged by automatic enrolment of employees into a PRPP where their employers offer one. Automatic enrolment will encourage regular saving in PRPPs by making participation the default choice for employees who do not actively make a decision to opt out. Canada's Minister of Finance decided to proceed with the PRPP framework precisely because it was considered an effective and appropriate way to target those modest and middle-income individuals who might not be saving enough for their retirement, in particular, those who currently do not have access to an employer-sponsored registered pension plan.

*Government Orders*

If the NDP had its way, it would increase the payroll taxes on small and medium-size businesses when it suggested doubling the CPP contributions. At a time when Canada's economic recovery is still fragile, imposing a job-killing tax on job creators is simply irresponsible. PRPPs would be an efficiently managed privately administered pension plan that would provide greater choice to employers and individuals and would promote pension coverage and retirement savings.

Once the provinces administer their PRPP legislation, the legislative and regulatory framework for PRPPs will be operational. This will allow PRPP administrators to develop and offer plans to Canadians and their employers. Working together with the provinces, I am confident we can get these important new retirement vehicles up and running for Canadians in a timely manner.

It is important to remember that PRPPs do not stand by themselves. They are part of a bigger picture. They are part of Canada's retirement income system. We must remember that our system is based on a balanced mix of public and private responsibility. It is also a mix of compulsory and voluntary vehicles that provide the basic minimum pension for Canadians, ensure a minimum amount of earnings replacement for all Canadian workers and offer an additional opportunity for voluntary retirement savings. The system both supports and draws upon the strength of a sound financial sector and complements our overall economic objectives of creating jobs and stimulating economic growth.

The success of this model rests on its three pillars. The first pillar is made up of the old age security, or the OAS, and the guaranteed income supplement, which provide a basic minimum income guarantee for seniors. These programs are funded primarily through taxes on Canadian workers. Our government is committed to ensuring the retirement security of Canadians. That is why we have to ensure that programs like the OAS and the GIS remain sustainable so they will be around for Canadians in the future.

The second pillar is the Canada pension plan and the Quebec pension plan. These are mandatory publicly-targeted benefit pension plans which provide a basic level of earnings replacement for all Canadian workers. There are currently 16.5 million workers contributing to CPP and QPP, with these programs paying \$44 billion in benefits per year to 6.5 million beneficiaries. The CPP is the centrepiece of Canada's pension system. I am proud to say it is fully funded, actuarially sound and sustainable for the long term.

The third pillar of Canada's retirement system includes tax-assisted private savings opportunities to help and encourage Canadians to accumulate additional savings for retirement. This includes registered pension plans and registered retirement savings pension plans. In total the cost of tax assistance provided on retirement savings is currently estimated at approximately \$25 billion per year.

● (1210)

All in all, these three pillars support each other in a way that is effective and also fair.

The introduction of the PRPP is only the latest example of our government's commitment to ensuring that Canada's retirement system continues to deliver for seniors.

Since 2006, our government has increased the age credit amount by \$1,000, increased it by another \$1,000 in 2009, doubled the maximum amount of income eligible for pension income credits to \$2,000, introduced pension income splitting and introduced the age limit for maturing pensions and RRSPs to 71 years from 69 years.

In budget 2008 we introduced the tax-free savings account, which is particularly beneficial to seniors. It helps them meet their ongoing savings needs on a tax efficient basis after they are no longer able to contribute to an RRSP.

In budget 2011 we announced a new guaranteed income supplement top-up benefit for the most vulnerable seniors. Seniors with little or no income will receive an additional annual benefit of up to \$600 for single seniors and \$840 for couples.

Overall, since coming to office, our government has provided over \$2 billion in additional annual targeted tax relief to seniors and pensioners.

Our government has a proven track record when it comes to ensuring that Canada's retirement income system is the best in the world. By introducing PRPPs, we are taking that system and making it stronger. This is something of which Canadians can truly be proud.

PRPPs would build on our commitment to improve the retirement income system in our country. This new private sector pension vehicle would improve the range of retirement savings options available to Canadians. PRPPs would provide a low cost retirement savings opportunity for hard-working Canadians, who currently do not have access to a workplace pension plan.

It is my hope that the provinces will follow our government's lead and introduce PRPP legislation on a timely basis. The many businesses and employees who I meet with fully support PRPPs. They believe, and I think the provinces appreciate this, that their governments should work together to deliver results on their priorities. The PRPP is a prime example of what we can do collectively to accomplish for Canadians when we do act together.

On that note, I encourage all hon. members to support the bill and ensure that Canada's retirement income system continues to be the envy of the world.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to welcome all members back to this place. I hope they all had a great Christmas and a great break.

The Minister of State for Finance would never intentionally mislead the House, so I will offer correct a part of what he said in his speech.

When he talked about the NDP plan and the rising cost to employers and that, he left out one important component. Should this plan to double the CPP be put in place, three years before it could even be implemented, there would be a seven year additional phase-in period. I want to be very clear on that.

*Government Orders*

In his speech the minister spoke about the capacity for bulk buying that people would have under the PRPP. We already have bulk buying under the Canada pension plan. It has a proven track record. It is portable across the country. That is clearly the best vehicle.

Most important, the PRPP would be subject to exactly the same market pressures and potential market failures as RRSPs.

Why is the minister moving in this direction?

● (1215)

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague back to the House of Commons after what I hope was a very restful Christmas break for him as well. I know how hard he works on behalf of seniors and I am sure he spent a lot of time talking to them. Therefore, I would hope he had an open mind when he was communicating with them.

We are not only dealing with seniors, but we are dealing with future seniors, future pensioners. Part of the government's overall strategy is to ensure that our wonderful system, which is the envy of the world, is there for our children and grandchildren and that we do not offload that burden of an unsustainable program on to them.

The Canada pension plan, as the hon. member mentioned, is a very good system. However, we have communicated with many businesses, as well as individuals who are part of that mandatory program, and they do not think this is the time, when businesses are struggling and coming out of the recession, to increase their burden. This provides an option for those businesses that want to provide a retirement plan for their employees to be part of this, to simplify the process.

As I reflected in my speech, many businesses find it a challenge. They are struggling to keep their businesses going. They are trying to grow their businesses. At the same time, they want to offer this to their employees.

In the long term, we continue to look at Canada pension plan. We share that jurisdiction with the provinces. We cannot make any arbitrary changes to Canada pension plan without the support of the provinces. We did not have unanimous support among the provinces to expand CPP at this moment. We did, however, have unanimous support from the provinces to move forward with the PRPP framework.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about PRPPs, about the Canada pension plan, about billions of dollars and about the retirement of Canadians. It is somewhat disappointing that the Minister of Finance would not have chosen this as an opportunity to clearly give an indication to all Canadians about where the government was on the broader picture.

On the announcement of this important bill, I would like to refer to this. Does the minister of state remember the 2006 Conservative election platform, "Stand up for Canada", referred to in the blue book. The is a specific quote on security for seniors:

Confirm its commitment to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS) as well as the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) as fundamental guarantees of income security in retirement years.

This was a commitment the Prime Minister gave to all Canadians just a few years back.

Even though I would have preferred to pose this to the Minister of Finance, my question is this. Is the Conservative, or the Reform government, prepared to commit to Canadians to support the CPP, the guaranteed income supplement and other pension programs? Are the Conservatives still true to the commitment today they made to Canadians back in 2006?

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, we are true to our commitments. In fact, I might remind the third party members that they actually voted against an increase to the guaranteed income supplement to seniors in the last budget. They ran their campaign against it. We tabled our budget in March and they threw us into an unnecessary election. All the way through that we said that we wanted to raise the GIS support for seniors. They told us not to do it, that it was a terrible idea.

Seniors in my riding were shocked and amazed that members of the third party would suggest that. Then when Parliament resumed, they voted against it.

We have a great system, a three-prong one. The Canada pension plan is part of it, a mandatory contribution which is working well. We have reassured Canadians it is working well into the future.

The OAS is a good system, a guaranteed income supplement for seniors who most need it, and that will remain for Canadian seniors.

● (1220)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of State for Finance for his speech today. It is an indication of the seriousness the government takes on the pension programs when we create a minister of state to deal with those pension items. Never before in Canadian history have we had a minister of state specifically looking at what the issues are when it comes to pensions and helping seniors in our communities.

I also thank the minister for pointing out that any changes to CPP require provincial agreement. We can talk in this House all we want about changes to CPP but if the provinces are not on board, nothing will happen.

In talking about the PRPP, lower costs for Canadians and cost effectiveness, could the minister tell us how he believes this new pension plan would be a low cost solution for retiring seniors?

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome my hon. colleague from Burlington back to this House. I am sure he spent much of his Christmas also consulting with his constituents. I know he has had some prebudget discussions with them.

The pooled registered pension plan has taken a lot of time to design. We have looked at models all around the world, in Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain. In fact, Great Britain is now developing its NEST program that it had hoped to put together in a matter of months. It has actually been about three years now. It is a challenge to put one of these programs forward.

We have taken all of the good points out of those programs and put them into this framework with the primary purpose of keeping low costs. That is why we are opening this up to any valid potential provider, whether it is a financial institution, a pension fund or an insurance company, that can provide strong oversight and can carry out the fiduciary duty to be responsible to the plan members, the employees, to ensure that it guarantees the safety of those funds in the plan.

Competition and the volume of plans that will be involved in the pooled registered pension plan will keep the costs low, lower than we have seen in this country. That is why this will be successful. That is why businesses are coming to us and thanking us for putting this forward. Businesses to which I have spoken in the last two days have said that they will take this and provide it to their employees.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to offer the New Democrats' perspective on Bill C-25. However, before I do that I want to refresh the memory of the House and Canadians who may be watching.

In June 2009, the House unanimously passed an NDP opposition day motion that laid out how the House should address the pension crisis that was rising rapidly at that time in our country. We will no doubt remember that the motion spoke of the need for a national pension insurance plan to protect workers' deferred wages; that their pension plans would be protected if their companies were to collapse. We also started a conversation at that time regarding a phased-in increase with the goal of doubling the Canada pension plan.

In that opposition day motion, but first in the platform of the NDP in the May election, was an increase to the guaranteed income supplement, a significant increase to raise seniors on GIS above the poverty line. That was for 250,000 Canadians, most of them women. Our party ran an election platform that showed Canadians what our intentions were for Canada's retirement security program. Nowhere in the Conservatives' platform was there a plank that indicated to Canadians that, once elected, the Conservatives would be changing the eligibility for old age security from 65 years old to 67 years old.

Last week, at the Davos convention, the Prime Minister told Canadians, along with a stunning PMO release, that many Canadians would need to work an extra two years before receiving old age security. Seniors pay taxes all of their lives expecting to have OAS as part of their retirement income. Now, the Prime Minister, apparently, wants to move the goalposts on them. What about single unemployed women? Those are the women who live in poverty under the GIS. They will now need to stay on some sort of provincial assistance for an additional two years because they are already in poverty and need Canadians' help.

I wonder if the government has considered the statistic that people in the bottom 20% of the workforce pass away five to six years earlier than those in the top 20%. In fact, that very condition exists between Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale and Hamilton East—Stoney Creek where the life expectancy differs because of people's poverty rate. Did the government consider that half of all low-income men will collect OAS-GIS cheques for only a short period of 10 years? Raising the retirement age would clearly have a

### *Government Orders*

negative impact on those persons aged 65 who are in poor health and unable to continue working.

What about the cost? The latest actuarial reports on the OAS-GIS project that the number of recipients will increase from 4.9 million today to 9.3 million by 2030. I think the opposition and the government agree on that statistic. However, the increase to the projected total cost is much more modest, which is from 2.4% of GDP to a peak of 3.2% of GDP by 2030, and that is because the economy is expected to grow.

However, we need to think about this for a moment. We have a government that, since taking power, has decreased corporate taxes by \$16 billion a year. That is \$16 billion taken out of the fiscal capacity of this place to make determinations for things that Canadians need and there is nothing Canadians need more than old age security protection.

Therefore, it should be of no surprise to anybody that, if the moneys coming in are removed, somewhere along the line we need to face the problem of what we need to pay out. We should never ever put that burden directly on our seniors, as suggested by the Prime Minister last week.

One may ask what all this has to do with Bill C-25. That is a fair question. The NDP believes that seniors' retirement income security is about far more than one plan or another option. We believe that we need to have a broader conversation on pensions and that Canadians want us to look at pensions as a whole. It is not to cut them but to ensure they are there to protect our seniors in years to come.

● (1225)

I will now speak specifically and more directly to Bill C-25. I would suggest that Bill C-25 appears to have been hastily put together. In fairness to his work, I know the minister of state did travel the country, as I did, listening to seniors. However, there also was a corresponding campaign across this country coming from labour, seniors groups and political parties, most notably the NDP, talking about increasing the Canada pension plan and the need to build the foundation because 12 million Canadians today do not have any savings or pensions and we need to build that foundation to protect them in the future.

*Government Orders*

The proposal in Bill C-25 would not even guarantee an actual pension. I would suggest that, at best, we should be referring to this as a pension scheme, not a pension plan. It is true that it would be a savings scheme that would pool the funds of members' accounts to achieve lower costs in relation to investment management and plan administration. However, a cautionary word must be put into this at this point. The fees to be applied by the plan managers would not be capped by this legislation. The experience elsewhere in the world is that the fees often erode pension savings to the point that they do not even keep pace with inflation. Clearly, the bill is designed to appeal to the self-employed and workers at small and mid-sized firms, companies that often lack the means to administer a private sector plan.

Another caution is that this plan would be just another kind of defined contribution plan. Employees would contribute a portion of their salary into the retirement scheme where it would be invested in stocks, bonds and mutual funds. Does that sound familiar? It sounds like an RRSP to me. Some companies with a clear conscience that want to see that their employees are well taken care of, although they are not required to do so, may choose to make matching contributions. However, I would suggest that in the climate of the business community today they cut every corner they can.

I want to caution again that this defined contribution plan would in no way guarantee how much money would be left when people retire. As with an RRSP, the market risks would be borne entirely and solely by the individual or the employee. PRPPs would be managed at a profit by regulated financial institutions like banks, insurance companies and trust companies.

As I already cautioned, Bill C-25 places no caps on administration fees or costs. It is flawed in that it merely assumes lower costs will emerge through competition in the market. Did people's telephone bill go up? Did their cable bill go up over the last 25 years since the market was deregulated? Of course they did. PRPPs allow for but do not require matching funds from employers so I believe they simply will not contribute.

Another caution for Canadians is that, unlike CPP, PRPPs would not be indexed to inflation. Provinces and territories would determine whether it would be mandatory for employers or employees of certain sized companies to offer PRPPs. Pooled registered pension plans, as envisioned in Bill C-25, would fail to protect retirement security because they would encourage families to gamble even more of their retirement savings in a failing stock market. If that market goes up, yes, they go up, but if it goes down, they go down with it.

Anybody who has watched their RRSPs plummet over the past year knows exactly how risky savings tied to the stock market can be. Telling families that investing in the same system that is already failing them shows how out of touch with Canadians the Conservatives truly are. The NDP has for the past three years championed a suite of retirement income security proposals, the first, as we have indicated, being that they should increase the Canada pension plan over a period of time that would double the benefits to \$1,920 a month in 30 years. Growing the CPP is simply the best, lowest cost pension reform option that is available to us today.

● (1230)

The government must also amend federal bankruptcy legislation to move pensioners and long-term disability recipients to the front of the line of creditors when their employer enters court protection or declares bankruptcy. We have seen company after company across the country take the savings of its workers and treat it as a secondary fund to pay off its bills.

As I said in my opening remarks, the bill seems to have been hastily thrown together in response to pressure from labour and other groups. However, according to the Conference Board of Canada, something we must keep in mind is that 1.6 million Canadians live in poverty and 12 million Canadians lack a pension plan. By OECD standards, Canada's CPP/QPP system is relatively miserly. Other countries similar to Canada provide far more generous public guaranteed pensions. Social security in the United States has benefits of about \$30,000 a year. The maximum benefit in Canada is less than \$12,000 per year. Even if we add old age security to that, which is, at a minimum, \$7,000 a year, the total is still far below U.S. social security. Most workers have no RRSPs because they cannot afford it. In fact, only 31% of eligible Canadians actually use their ability to invest in RRSPs.

Meanwhile, the latest numbers for the return on CPP investments show that the CPP barely lost ground by 1%, while the stock market fell by 11%. There goes the pooled retirement pension plan down 11%.

The Minister of State for Finance stated that one of the places the government studied was Australia. Australia had a similar plan to PRPPs, but the plan was mandatory, with an opt-out provision. The Australian super fund required employers to enrol their workers in one of the many defined contribution plans offered by the private sector. A recent review commissioned by the Australian government, after 12 years' experience, reported that the Australian super fund did not even match inflation, again, because the fees being charged were eroding it.

For six years, the Conservatives have done next to nothing by way of securing retirement for Canadians. Bill C-25 is yet another hastily thrown together half measure in lieu of real action. Canadians want and deserve better. The government, once again, with these fees, almost like bonuses to the executives, has put the interests of Bay Street ahead of the interests of hard-working Canadian citizens.

We on this side of the House often hear comments about our ability or our chance to govern. If the NDP were to govern, it would ensure that our pension plans would be there to give retirement security to seniors, as they deserve. Canadians do not want their retirement savings subject to the market. If they did, they would invest in RRSPs. It is very clear they need protection.

*Government Orders*

For some of the reasons that I have just spoken of, New Democrats will not support this savings scheme, because the Conservatives are offering it up instead of taking real action on both protecting existing pensions and enhancing retirement security for those who lack a workplace pension plan at all.

PRPPs are not pensions. While the government claims a PRPP will provide Canadians with lower fees to potential economies of scale that do not exist with RRSPs, there is no data that proves that. In fact, less than one-third of the people entitled to contribute to RRSPs do not do so.

Over 24% of those surveyed use the TFSAs for retirement savings. Yes, that is one tool in the toolbox. However, it is time for the government to take real action to provide retirement security for those 12 million Canadians I referred to earlier, the 12 million who have no savings, who have no pension and who, God bless them, have a very bleak future. Canadians do not need yet one more private plan: a voluntary savings scheme. Voluntary savings have not worked, for a lot of reasons.

• (1235)

This scheme, if enacted, will do little or nothing to improve the ability of Canadians to foresee their future and live in dignity. Expanding CPP on the other hand, would not cost the government any more than the proposed PRPP. Expanding CPP would not entail transferring huge management fees to private institutions because we have the CPP Investment Board already managing the funds.

The PRPP, as outlined in the bill, fails to extend coverage to those who are unable to afford a pension in the first place. I repeated that several times in my speech because that is the essence of the problem facing many Canadians today. They have very little hope for their future in retirement.

I would like to read from the *Calgary Herald*, November 27, 2010, which says:

The CPP already covers almost all Canadian workers and thus spreads the risk and management fees. It is fully portable, offers guaranteed income to all retirees, and is the only risk-free investment broadly available to workers. Private RRSPs and employer pension plans have proven much riskier than initially billed. Those who are in company pension plans are likely in a defined contribution scheme, where the amount that goes in is predetermined, but the payout is based on how well the fund is invested and ultimately performs. Nortel workers know only too well how that worked.

Professor Jon Kesselman, Canada Research Chair, Public Finance, Simon Fraser University School of Public Policy, says:

Expanding the CPP is the best option for improving Canadian workers' retirement income security; it can ensure results that none of the many alternative reform proposals for private schemes can provide.

CARP, which has made many presentations to our finance committee over the years, and the director of political advocacy at CARP, Susan Eng, writes:

CARP remains committed to improving retirement benefits for the current crop of seniors, including increasing CPP, OAS and GIS payments, getting a moratorium on RRIF withdrawals, making access to Tax-Free Savings Accounts retroactive and lobbying to remove the HST on seniors' energy bills.

At this point I will stop with the other commentary and add that the government has been clearly and repeatedly on notice in the House, since 2009, of a crisis situation for the pension security for

Canadians going forward. It is not that this was a surprise out of the blue.

We heard commentary earlier today from the member for Burlington, who talked about the fact that we needed the agreement of the provinces in order to move forward on the Canada pension plan. It is smoke and mirrors because we do need a majority of the provinces. Going into Kananaskis, six finance ministers from across the country wrote to our finance minister in support of expanding the CPP.

There are issues for the provinces, but in the last round of talks between the finance ministers and the Minister of Finance, there was very little said or done on the Canada pension plan. There is room for action on the Canada pension plan and very clearly the NDP believes that is the vehicle of choice and it is the most secure vehicle for moving forward.

• (1240)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I also want to welcome my colleague back to the House after the break. I take issue with a few of the things that were said and I would like some clarification by the member if possible.

First and foremost, trying to put words in the Prime Minister's mouth is really not acceptable. What was mentioned certainly was not what was said in Davos.

Aside from that, when we talk about the provinces and their jurisdiction over pensions, we mentioned several times the need for provinces to be on board in expanding CPP. The Canadian Pension Plan Act says very clearly that two-thirds of the population in two-thirds of provinces and territories must be on board and we do not have that, and the hon. member knows that. Therefore, when he cites different provinces that wanted to consider it, there was some room for consideration, but without meeting the criteria of that plan it was not possible. Therefore, I would hope the hon. member would correct his previous statements.

Is the hon. member's party suggesting that we expressly ignore the will of the provinces and territories, which have said very clearly that they want the PRPP, particularly in Quebec which has been our strongest ally in putting forward the PRPP? Is that what the member is suggesting?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Speaker, I also welcome the parliamentary secretary back. I clearly said in my remarks that the Prime Minister spoke in Davos, and I referred to the PMOs issuance that was given to the media. That is where the conversation began on changing age eligibility for OAS from 65 years to 67 years. The Prime Minister spoke on pensions as a whole and it was a combination of that. I am sure that all government members are hearing from their constituents that this is how they understood it.

*Government Orders*

As far as consensus on the CPP is concerned, I realize what the legislation says. I am saying that the finance minister should sit down with the provinces and talk to them and work through this. The Minister of Finance indicated in the House last June that he was prepared to do it. I asked him at an emergency meeting of finance committee and he said that now was not the time, and I agree.

If we get the go-ahead to change the CPP, there would be a three year window before it would be implemented and then a seven year phase-in period, which would allow companies and workers ten full years to adjust to those changes.

It is clear we have a different view, but we have to maintain communication with the provinces.

• (1245)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, late one night in the Manitoba legislature a group of retired teachers appeared before committee with a passionate plea. They talked in detail about the impact of their pension program and pleaded with the government to do more.

Over the last couple of days people have come to me again emphasizing just how important the pension issue really is. They have also emphasized the importance of having the ability to communicate their messages.

I listened to the member. NDP members may be a bit offside in the sense that they do not necessarily see a role for the private sector to play in helping with pensionable income.

There is an overall retirement issue, whether it is the retirement pensions of teachers, RRSP contributions or contributions to CPP. There is a mixture out there. The OAS, the CPP and the guaranteed income supplement make up the core, and the government has really fallen short in this regard.

I am interested in hearing the member's belief in terms of the overall need for a multitude of different types of pension programs that ultimately help supplement income in retirement years.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Speaker, nobody is saying that there is no room for an option, but this option would fail the test. It would not offer any kind of guarantee as to what someone would have when he or she retired. It would be completely at the risk of market fluctuations. Anybody who has had investments in the last two or three years knows how bad the market can be. It is like riding a yo-yo at times. This would be another tool in the toolbox, but as far as I am concerned it would be a tool that would fail.

We have said, and I said again in my speech, that we should look at pensions as a whole. We should balance them. We should also look at the best possible vehicle for Canadians and that is clearly the Canada pension plan.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to re-examine the government's arguments with regard to the proposed plan. The member for Burlington and the Parliamentary Secretary mentioned that the provinces were not prepared to accept enhancements to the Canada pension plan, but that they were prepared to accept the items set out in Bill C-25.

I closely followed federal-provincial discussions about the pension plan and how to deal with the issue. At the time, the provinces were prepared to accept enhancements to the Canada pension plan, but the federal government said that enhancements were not being proposed and that only their proposal was on the table. Could my colleague comment on this?

The second thing that the Minister of State mentioned is the fact that an enhancement would lead to an increase in Canada pension plan contributions, which is unacceptable especially to employers. Nevertheless, the government has no problem increasing employment insurance premiums, despite the fact that the fund already has a surplus. This would also affect employers. This argument therefore does not necessarily apply to the Canada pension plan, a better plan that would provide much greater economic security for retirees. I would also like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Speaker, very clearly, there is a difference of opinion between us and the government on this.

However, the government cannot shut the door on its relationships with the provinces. We have an opportunity here to, in a very direct fashion, deal with the provinces and talk to them about the changes necessary. As I indicated, our understanding is that at least six provinces were pushing hard for this. In some place on this, there is room for dialogue.

As far as the cost go, as I indicated, Canadians are willing to pay their share moving forward. They are not able to do so in the situation today where 12 million do not have pensions and do not have savings. However, it implies they need a bit of a nudge to put some money aside.

If we allow Canadians to put that money into the Canada pension plan, the safest vehicle there is for Canadians, then at the end of the day they will have participated in their own retirement fund and will have taken some of the costs away from the Government of Canada and the provincial governments.

If we do not do this, then 12 million Canadians are going to hit a wall and it will be a very desperate situation for seniors.

• (1250)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think we have been clear on the CPP issue that the members opposite are bringing forward that we need the consent of the provinces. We do not have it. We have been discussing it with them.

My question today is, if the NDP members really care about workers and the pensions of seniors, why are they not even voting to get this bill to committee so it can be discussed? Was it not the NDP members' premise that they wanted to have Parliament work and for us to work together to find solutions?

Not even voting for this bill to go to committee is not finding solutions for any senior or future pensioner in this country. Why is the NDP not allowing for a discussion of the bill at committee?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Speaker, the last time I looked there was a majority on the other side of the House.



*Government Orders*

NDP members will express our opinions in opposition to this particular flawed bill, and the government of the day with a majority will take it to committee. There will be a discussion there.

However, to go back to the member's first point about the cost of the CPP and the consensus required, it does not require 100% of the provinces. It does not require 100% of the representation of the people of Canada.

More importantly, we need the dialogue. We need to go back. The provinces as a whole, including those that object, understand there is a pension crisis in this country. To shut the door on that dialogue by using a flawed excuse that we do not have all of the consensus needed is disingenuous to the Canadian public, which deserves better than to hear that in this place.

The reality is that Canadians need help, and it is up to this place to provide it.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek consent to split my time with my colleague, the member for Kings—Hants.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, a little more two years ago I asked the government of the day what it planned to do to protect and preserve pensions for all Canadians. The minister responded by saying that pensions were provincial and should be left to provincial legislatures to deal with. He said pensions were not a federal problem no matter how much the opposition cried out.

Canadians rightly found that notion to be wrong, short-sighted and unacceptable. Therefore, what is Bill C-25? It is the government's answer to our calls for pension reform. In simple terms, providing the provinces go along with this, it creates a federal notion of a pooled registered pension plan similar to a group RRSP. Clearly, that is the best thing the government could come up with.

In 1998, when the current Prime Minister was campaigning, he announced that he wanted to privatize the Canada pension plan. The Conservatives proposed the elimination of the public Canada pension plan. Backed by a bit of research, that is clearly there: it is exactly what the current Prime Minister said. He suggested that the Canada pension plan should be replaced by a super savings account that would allow Canadians to put all of their extra money, if they had any, into investments for their retirement. PRPPs are similar to that fundamentally flawed idea. It continues to be just as flawed an idea now as it was then.

What is the problem? While the Prime Minister is the sixth highest paid political leader in the world, earning an annual salary of \$296,000 U.S., and telling Canadians to put their extra money into the bank for their retirement, he seems to forget that not everyone has so much extra money. What about those seniors who pay their taxes, raise their families and work hard but still do not have any extra money to invest? How are they going to survive?

The Liberals have long believed that Canadian seniors need and deserve a secure and reliable plan to help keep the "gold" in the golden years. I mean a pension plan, not an investment plan. In an effort to do this, on March 1, 1928, Liberal Prime Minister King

officially created a limited old age security pension plan. That plan was expanded in 1952 by another Liberal prime minister, Louis St. Laurent.

Recent statements by the Prime Minister seem to indicate that the Conservatives do not share this view. They voted against all of those previous policies and continue to look at ways to erode the security of Canadian seniors, which seems much more like waging war on seniors and the poor than anything else.

Under old age security, the guaranteed income supplement and the CPP that were established by the Liberals over the past 90 years, Canadian seniors have gradually been lifted out of poverty. We have finally reached a level where there are a lower number of seniors living in poverty than ever before, although that level is still not acceptable.

The Conservatives have opposed each of these measures. Now it seems they want seniors to work even longer. Forcing them to work longer and harder to save for retirement, on top of asking them to pay for \$6 billion in giveaways to the largest corporations, \$13 billion for prisons and \$30 billion for untended stealth fighter jets, is not a plan for pensions.

The PRPPs will not work for those who need it most, but for those who have lots of money. For many of us who deal with seniors who are struggling every day, this will not be a very good tool. PRPPs are nothing but locked in RRSPs.

Canadians could face a number of problems if this plan proceeds. They will have to become market experts, as their employer will pay no administrative role in the PRPP plan. Members will bear 100% of the investment risk. A single market stumble could spell the end of any retirement home. We know how difficult the investment industry is when one goes to invest, yet that person has to rely on someone who has that expertise. The majority of Canadians do not have that expertise and will again be subjected to the volatility of the market and those making investments for them. Also, there is no ability to move out of an underperforming PRPP into a performing one or one with better services.

If the provinces make PRPPs mandatory, which we do not know yet, employers will be forced to create administrative systems to enrol members. As well, because both employers and members can opt out, costs will be incurred for no reason.

It is unclear whether homemakers can contribute to or belong to a PRPP. We clearly understand that they are not at the top of the list of concerns of the current government. Yet again the so-called Conservative plan excludes those who contribute to society outside of the work force.

*Government Orders*

●(1255)

Why are we not learning from some of the mistakes of others? The Australian government adopted its version of PRPPs in 1997, over a decade ago. A recent study published in the *Rotman International Journal of Pension Management* found that the only one who had benefited from the plan was the financial services industry. That is a shame.

PRPPs will be managed by the same people who manage Canada's mutual funds, and Canadians already pay some of the highest management fees in the world. I hear no talk about how the government will control that or put caps on any of those management fees for anyone subject to this. Clearly, those who will make the most money out of it are the banks and financial institutions.

Morningstar recently released a report grading 22 countries on the management expense ratios levied on their mutual funds, and Canada was the only country to receive an F. Shame on everyone.

Reducing government spending is a laudable goal. However, the financial players offering PRPPs will need to offer annuities so that plan members may convert their accumulated balances into a stream of pension payments. Once that occurs, insurers are required by law to price in a profit margin and to keep regulatory capital aside to underwrite the contracts. These two requirements alone are achieved at the expense of the plan members, who will see their pensions reduced as a result. This is a very inefficient way of delivering pensions.

These two requirements are the cornerstones of the PRPP plan. With that in mind, I am left to wonder how PRPPs could possibly yield results for Canadian pensioners. The simple answer is that they will not help the average Canadian prepare for retirement. The PRPP is another tool in the toolbox. It is not necessarily a particularly good tool, but clearly it is the best the government is prepared to go forward with.

Instead of copying the failed work of others, why did the Prime Minister not seek to lift seniors out of poverty? A supplemental Canada pension plan, already proposed by the Liberals, would provide the best of both worlds. It would create a new retirement savings vehicle for Canadians who needed it, while delivering the low overhead cost structure of the Canada pension plan.

A supplementary Canada pension plan would be a simple and cost-effective solution to the looming pension crisis, and is very different from the NDP proposal. This is a defined benefit pension for everyone, including homemakers and farmers. Anyone could contribute, even those who have left the work force during their lives for child rearing, illness and educational advancement. It would use proven and existing resources to give every Canadian man, woman and child a reliable and stable investment vehicle for the future.

Every Canadian has the right to live in dignity, especially during their golden years, and a SCPP would allow them to do that. The very best part of that is that a SCPP would not require the retention of assets to create a profit margin for banks and insurance companies, and it would not require them to keep regulatory capital aside to underwrite those contracts. It would be a win for the average Canadian pensioner.

However, the Conservatives, as I indicated, could not care less. By ignoring calls to improve the CPP and by floating the idea of slashing the old age pension of those aged 65 to 67, the Conservatives have shown their true colours.

Balancing the budget on the backs of seniors is nothing short of waging war on the poor. It is unacceptable and the government should be ashamed for even putting that idea forward, but clearly that is the opinion of the Conservatives. They have never supported old age security, the Canada pension plan and the guaranteed income supplement, which continues to show in their colours. As far as they are concerned, they will support a big corporation, but if a person cannot take care of themselves, goodbye Charlie. That is not the Liberal way. That is not the Canadian way.

●(1300)

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech, and some of the inaccuracies and the hyperbole that was used was rather worrisome.

My first question would be about why the Liberals voted against raising the GIS. When we look at what our government has done to improve the lives of seniors and their lot in life, there have been so many things done. We improved the GIS quite markedly. We removed thousands of seniors from the tax rolls and we abolished the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated workers. In addition, we introduced pension income splitting.

There are so many things we have done to support the seniors across our country. Why? Because we know our country has an aging demographic.

I would like to go back to my first question. We increased the GIS exemption and introduced the largest GIS increase in a quarter of a century. If the member is so concerned about the seniors in this country, why did she and her Liberal opposition party vote against the raising of the GIS?

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, history shows where the government's priorities are. Today all we need to do is pick up any newspaper and we can clearly tell what the choices are for the government: \$6 billion in corporate tax cuts, \$30 billion in purchasing fighter jets and building prisons. Those are the issues that matter to it. It has little interest in improving the lives of seniors. Using income tax for those who have lots of money is one avenue. There are those on the bottom rung living on \$15,000 a year and now we are suggesting that they will need to wait until age 67 before they can even start to live on \$15,000 a year. It is total hypocrisy and ridiculous.

*Government Orders*

•(1305)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the Liberals said that they would gradually enhance the pension plan; however, they have provided very few details since that time. We, in the NDP, believe that pensions should be doubled in the future in order to eliminate poverty, especially among seniors.

I would like the member to explain how the Liberals intend to carry out their plan.

[*English*]

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, we currently have a Canada pension plan that is administered very well, has very low investment fees and so on. We could include an add-on to the current Canada pension plan and call it a supplementary Canada pension plan that everybody who has a social insurance number would have. If people have an extra \$100 a month, instead of putting it into an RRSP they could put it into their supplementary plan. It would be capped as RRSPs are capped but there would not be a question about where their money will be invested. It would not matter if people were homemakers, farmers, self-employed or unemployed. No one wants to live on only \$15,000 a year but many of our constituents live on that and, quite possibly, some of them live on less than that.

The supplementary plan is there. It would include low cost minimum fees and it would be a great investment. People would not need to worry about what may happen to the stock market tomorrow. History has shown a steady return on the Canada pension over many years. Thank God we have the Canada pension plan program and that the Liberals had the foresight to bring in that plan.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak to Bill C-25, the pooled registered pension plans act.

Canada's retirement system is based on four pillars. The first is the OAS-GIS, the Canadian social safety net for seniors. The second pillar is the CPP, Canada's mandatory public pension plan with defined benefits. The third is the tax-assisted private saving options, such as RRSPs, registered pension plans and the TFSAs. The fourth is private assets, such as a house or the equity people may have in their home, which they may try to downsize at some point to better fund their retirement.

I thank my colleague, the member for York West and the Liberal critic for seniors and pensions, for her exceptionally beneficial and important work and analysis on pension issues over the last several years. Through her hard work, she has developed and helped present to this Parliament and to Canadians a well thought out optional voluntary supplemental CPP that would be superior to the PRPP for a number of reasons, which she has helped explain.

First, a defined benefit plan as opposed to a simple PRPP plan with defined contributions would provide Canadian retirees with that extra degree of security despite market fluctuations. It would also make it voluntary and portable and, unlike the PRPP, it would provide lower administrative costs so that more of one's investment could end up benefiting one's retirement rather than going to ridiculously high fees, which are a real challenge in Canada,

particularly with some of the mutual funds. In fact, offering a voluntary supplemental CPP option would create more competition for the PRPPs in terms of fee structures. One of the benefits in having a voluntary supplemental CPP, which I do not think has been adequately considered by this House, is that it would help keep fees low in the PRPP system and for those plans.

The reality is that the Canada pension plan itself has a very low fee and low cost structure administratively. It is diversified in terms of asset class, it is diversified geographically and it is diversified by sector of investment. It is professionally managed. As a result of decisions taken by the Chrétien government and Paul Martin as finance minister back in the 1990s, they helped ensure the fiscal and prudential strength of the Canada pension plan for decades to come. In fact, we have the strongest public pension in the world as a result of those decisions. Also, the decision to invest in public markets through a prudent, professional plan was taken at that time.

It was interesting to hear the Prime Minister last week in Davos taking credit for the prudential strength of the Canadian pension plan. In fact, I believe he, along with the National Citizens Coalition, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and the Reform Party at the time, fought every step of the way those decisions taken by the Chrétien government which enabled Canada to have one of the strongest pension plans in the world. However, that did not stop the Prime Minister from taking credit for it. Next he will take credit for the oil and gas under the ground in Alberta and the oil under the water off Newfoundland and Labrador, although we all know that was Danny Williams, but I digress.

In terms of Canadians' financial situation right now, it is important to realize that Canadians have record levels of personal debt. On average, there is \$1.53 of debt for every \$1 of annual income. The Conservatives actually made the situation worse with their first budget in 2006 when the current finance minister recklessly followed the U.S. model and introduced 40-year mortgages with zero down payment. That was the same finance minister who had inherited a \$13 billion surplus but raised government spending by three times the rate of inflation and put Canada into deficit even before the downturn.

Today, with an aging population, historically high debt levels and low savings rates, it is clear that the government must make Canada's retirement income system a priority so that seniors are not left out in the cold.

*Government Orders*

• (1310)

The first pillar I want to speak to is old age security. Old age security was introduced in 1952 by a Liberal government. It was then followed by the GIS, the guaranteed income supplement, introduced by a Liberal government in 1967. The OAS and the GIS have formed a key part of Canada's social safety net. This has been a defining element in terms of Canadians' social values and reflects the dignity that we believe seniors ought to retire to. Ensuring that the government sets aside enough money to pay for the social safety net has always been a priority.

The amount we spend on OAS does fluctuate with our demographics. Last year the federal government spent 2.37% of Canada's GDP on OAS payments. Twenty years ago, in 1992, spending on the OAS reached 2.72% of Canada's GDP. In 2030, spending on the OAS is expected to reach 3.16% of GDP. Ensuring that we have enough money to pay for these increases is a matter of priorities, of planning and of making decisions based on evidence as opposed to making decisions based on ideology.

Back in the nineties, the Conservative government of the day tried to cut the OAS by scrapping the guarantee that OAS payments would keep up with inflation. This was done after they had promised not to touch or reduce Canadian pension benefits. A 63-year-old, Solange Denis, told Prime Minister Brian Mulroney at the time:

You made promises that you wouldn't touch anything... you lied to us. I was made to vote for you and then it's goodbye, Charlie Brown.

We will all remember that pivotal moment. The Conservatives, ultimately, reversed their decision on that and listened to seniors across Canada, like the Canadian Association of Retired Persons and other organizations representing seniors and grassroots across Canada. Canadians stood up and defended themselves against that cut at the time.

Last week, the Prime Minister signalled that his government was considering increasing the qualification age from 65 to 67 for OAS benefits in Canada. We need to think about who would be impacted by this and whether it is fair. According to tax returns filed in 2009, the latest information available from the CRA website, more than 40% of seniors receiving old age security had an income of less than \$20,000 per year. Furthermore, over half of the OAS money went to seniors earning less than \$25,000 per year. Therefore, increasing the qualification age for OAS disproportionately hurts those Canadians who are most vulnerable, seniors living at or below the poverty line.

By increasing the qualification age for OAS from 65 to 67, the Conservatives would be taking away up to \$30,000 from each of our most vulnerable senior citizens. These cuts to OAS would disproportionately hurt the poor, especially older single women. OAS cuts would force these seniors onto provincial welfare rolls and put seniors' drug coverage at risk as provinces only provide certain drug coverage to seniors receiving the GIS supplement. If people do not qualify for GIS, they do not qualify for drug coverage. We can only think of the unintended consequences of these changes on poor seniors.

The Conservatives are trying to download all these costs on to the provinces, with provincial treasuries having to pick up the tab or just do without. It is the same with the Conservative's jail agenda,

billions of dollars of federal money but also billions in costs imposed on provincial governments, without any consultation, negotiation or discussion with provincial governments.

It is also important to look back a couple of years when the Conservatives cut the OAS to prisoners in Canadian penitentiaries. At that time, the human resources minister spoke of cutting off OAS for prisoners serving a sentence of at least two years. She said, "Canadians who work hard, who contribute to the system, who play by the rules deserve government benefits such as Old Age Security".

It is interesting now to take those words forward and see that the Conservatives are now treating senior citizens like prisoners. They are treating senior citizens today, people who have worked hard and played by the rules, like they would treat prisoners.

• (1315)

It is bad enough that the Conservatives follow an ideologically rigid and ineffectual tough on crime agenda that will not work, but where will this tough on seniors agenda get Canada? I look forward to questions.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member is a former cabinet minister under the Liberal government and most of us have heard about the demographic issue coming forward for some period of time. For some of us, it has been over 30 years and certainly as baby boomers we saw this issue coming forward and what was going to take place.

What steps did the member, as a former cabinet minister, take to deal with these issues when he was in government? What substantive things did his government do at that time concerning these issues?

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, that is a terrific question because it was the government of Mr. Chrétien, and Paul Martin as finance minister, that made the fundamental changes to the Canada pension plan, which prepared the CPP for decades of prudential strength looking forward to the future. It was also the government, with Paul Martin as finance minister, that eliminated a \$43 billion deficit, balanced the books and ensured that \$100 billion was paid down on the national debt. Of course, we know we have now lost all that because of the Conservatives' ideological profligacy in the last few years.

As a minister specifically, I was part of the expenditure review committee of cabinet which was led by the hon. member for Markham—Unionville. During that time we saved billions of dollars. We did not do it based on ideology; we did it based on evidence. We looked at every department and every agency and we worked with departments and agencies. My department of public works saved over \$3 billion, working with public servants, and \$1 billion every year since by reforming procurement, by privatizing in some cases and by outsourcing in other cases, but also by getting better value for tax dollars. I am certain the hon. member would support all of those initiatives.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the remarks by the member for Kings—Hants.

There seems to be some confusion around the announcement of the Prime Minister in Davos. It is not unusual for the Prime Minister to show contempt for this place by making fairly major policy announcements outside the country. However, there seems to be a lot of discussion on the OAS and the fact that it seems to be the government's objective to increase the time people can qualify, to move it ahead two years to age 67.

I ask the member for Kings—Hants this. Is it true that OAS and GIS are linked, that if we raise one, we will be raising them both? Is this not really just an attack on the most vulnerable in Canadian society?

• (1320)

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, we understand that to be the case, that if we change the qualification age for OAS, we do the same for GIS. Of course, GIS is there for those seniors who are significantly below the poverty line.

However, beyond that, just the OAS numbers alone, over half the seniors receiving OAS in Canada make less than \$25,000. Just think of that. These seniors are one of Canada's most vulnerable populations. It was bad and cruel enough that the Conservatives made the caregiver tax credit non-refundable, denying that benefit to low-income seniors, but it is heartless to attack seniors further.

I found it interesting that at Davos last week, at the World Economic Forum, there were world leaders almost without exception saying that income inequality and the gap between rich and poor was an issue that needed to be addressed in countries around the world. The only leader who did not talk about income inequality was the Canadian Prime Minister. Not only did he not speak to income inequality and the challenge it represents to societies, but he actually floated an idea that would make it worse in Canada.

This is another example of how we have a bit of a challenge with the occupiers in the NDP and the Tea Partiers in the Conservatives. We need a good, moderate, centrist, practical Liberal government focused on the future of Canadians and helping all Canadians achieve a dignified retirement.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to participate in today's debate about the importance of passing Bill C-25 in good time.

I would like to use my time to take a closer look at this new retirement savings option for Canadian workers within the broader context of growing income inequality and, more importantly, what our government has done to fix that.

This troubling trend is affecting countries around the world, and Canada is no exception.

The global economy is more integrated than ever in terms of trade, the job market and even monetary systems, so it should come as no surprise that Canada is feeling the effects of this phenomenon that originated elsewhere. Other countries with advanced economies and social safety nets have experienced similar repercussions. For

example, the growing gap between rich and poor in Germany is virtually identical to that in Canada in the most recent decade studied by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD.

That being said, we must keep in mind that the effects of increased immigration and heightened global interaction and integration have been, for the most part, extremely positive.

In absolute terms, fewer families are living in poverty, and their median after-tax incomes are higher, according to a *Vancouver Sun* report in October, and this despite the increasing income inequality that has been observed.

These observations are seconded by Statistics Canada research showing that, from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, after-tax incomes and transfers increased in all income brackets and that, in fact, low-income families are not nearly as common in Canada as they once were. Of course, this does not mean that we should not consider income inequality.

The Minister of Finance recently spoke about his concerns in this regard. As reported in the *Toronto Star*, the minister said that income distribution is important and that the issue is that while a very small number of people have very high incomes, others do not have the same opportunities. This is not in keeping with the equal opportunity economy that our government is endeavouring to build, an economy that provides everyone with the opportunity to succeed no matter what their background.

We must not forget that this trend began well before the current government of Canada was brought to power by Canadians.

Therefore, it is one of many challenges that will be handled better by our government than by the opposition parties, as Canadians clearly realize. That is why they gave our government a majority. Canadians can rest assured that we have implemented a number of effective measures to address this challenge, including the pooled registered pension plan, or PRPP.

Some of the comments made by opposition members in this debate would have us believe that the solution to the problem of income disparity is for Canadian governments to simply take money from some people and give it to others, thus magically solving the problem.

The reality is that this approach would impoverish everyone. Our government knows that this is not how a country creates and distributes wealth in the real world.

Scuttling the entire ship will not encourage retirement savings, increase the standard of living or bridge the income gap. The real way to achieve these objectives is to take advantage of the power of our job creators, so that they can invest in higher wages, training, equipment and technology that allows them to do more, be more competitive globally and share their success with the country, which will benefit all Canadians.

*Government Orders*

• (1325)

With the next phase of Canada's economic action plan—a low-tax plan for jobs and growth—we are taking significant actions to create these conditions. These actions include reducing the tax burden for Canadians, thereby providing support to families and individuals, and encouraging businesses to make the types of productivity-enhancing investments that result in sustained economic growth.

As a result of broad-based federal and provincial business tax changes, Canada now has an overall tax rate on new business investment that is substantially lower than any other G7 country and is below the average of the member countries of the OECD. This tax advantage is aggressively positioning Canada for long-term success.

*Forbes* magazine recently ranked Canada number one in its annual look at the best countries for business. Globally, more and more people are putting their money to work on this understanding and investing in Canada as the place to be in the future. With the strong mandate we received from Canadians in the last election and with the next phase of Canada's economic action plan becoming a reality, these investments are going to pay off not just for investors, but for all Canadians. When Canada's entrepreneurs and job creators succeed, all Canadians succeed.

With the implementation of the PRPP framework, Canadians saving for retirement will be in the best possible position to invest in this dynamic approach to creating wealth and to support and benefit from it. As we have heard, PRPPs represent an innovative, low-cost, privately administered and accessible pension vehicle to help Canadians meet their retirement savings objectives. These plans are especially important to small and medium-sized businesses because they will allow such business owners and their employees to access a comprehensive, low cost, privately administered pension plan for the very first time.

Professional administrators will be subject to a fiduciary standard of care to ensure that funds are invested in the best interests of plan members. By pooling pension savings, Canadians will have greater purchasing power. The lower costs resulting from pooled purchasing will allow members to devote more of their income to retirement savings. These plans will be straightforward in order to simplify membership and management.

PRPPs will have to be harmonized across the provinces, which will further reduce administrative costs. These design features will eliminate many of the barriers that used to prevent some employers from offering retirement plans to their employees. Our government believes that this will encourage many small businesses to offer PRPPs. This is quite significant when we consider—and this is rather astonishing—that just over 60% of Canadians do not have a retirement plan provided by their employer. What is more, some Canadians might not be capitalizing on all the saving possibilities currently available to them through individual products such as RRSPs and they might not be saving for retirement on a regular basis.

In cases where employers offer PRPPs, we encourage automatic enrollment for employees. Automatic enrollment will encourage regular savings in PRPPs. Employees who do not opt out will be automatically enrolled.

On another note, in December 2011, Parliament passed the Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act, which implemented other important aspects of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan to help our economy flourish.

• (1330)

One of the most important measures in the act reflects the idea that jobs are the best income support program.

To protect jobs and support growth, the act grants small businesses a hiring tax credit of up to \$1,000 to offset the increase in their employment insurance premiums in 2011 relative to their 2010 premiums. Some 525,000 businesses, and even more Canadian workers, will be able to benefit from this temporary measure.

I want to emphasize that this credit is in addition to our recent initiatives to limit employment insurance premium increases and to protect jobs.

Because we believe that employment is the best social security program, we introduced the working income tax benefit in 2007 and enhanced in it 2009 to encourage low-income Canadians to find and keep jobs.

As my government colleagues have pointed out, the WITB has provided over \$1.1 billion per year to working low-income Canadians. Together with other tax cuts introduced by the government, the WITB has had an extremely positive impact in terms of encouraging people to find work and on the financial situation of many low-income Canadians.

Our government recognizes that it is important not only to create and protect good jobs to shrink the income gap, but also to enable people with jobs to keep more of their hard-earned money.

This is especially important for low-income Canadians who spend a greater proportion of their income to meet their families' basic needs: food, housing and clothing.

That is why our government reduced the tax burden for individuals, families and businesses by an estimated \$220 billion in 2008-09 and for the following five years.

Individuals and families in all tax brackets are benefiting from tax cuts, with those in lower income brackets benefiting from proportionally bigger tax cuts.

For the 2011 tax year, one-third of the individual income tax cuts introduced by our government has benefited Canadians whose income was lower than \$41,544, even though they pay only about 13% tax.

*Government Orders*

Cutting the GST from 7% to 5% gave all Canadians a break, including those who do not earn enough to pay income tax.

The GST credit, which was not reduced even though the GST was cut by 2%, returns more than \$1.1 billion per year to low- and modest-income Canadians.

In addition, all taxpayers benefit from personal income tax reductions, such as the reduction from 16% to 15% for the lowest tax bracket, and the increase in the basic personal amount that Canadians can earn, which is not subject to federal income tax.

The Canada employment credit is another important measure that truly helps workers make ends meet. A credit of up to \$1,065 is available for the 2011 taxation year to help cover work-related expenses, such as buying a personal computer, uniforms and supplies.

Measures implemented by our government since coming to power ensure that low-income Canadians now pay considerably less tax and receive greater benefits. A single parent with only one child who earns \$37,000 will pay \$1,125 less in personal income tax in 2011. In addition, as a result of changes made to the national child benefit supplement in budget 2009, this parent will also receive additional benefits of up to \$241.

As a result of initiatives taken by our government since 2006, more than one million low-income Canadians no longer have to pay taxes.

• (1335)

But that is not all. Our government knows that employment is the best social safety net, and we have implemented measures to create jobs and to allow the incumbents to keep more of their hard-earned income.

Nevertheless, we realize that, for various reasons, some people are unable to take advantage of these measures. We therefore took action in order to remedy this situation.

The Canada social transfer and the Canada health transfer allow the Government of Canada to provide significant financial assistance to the provinces and territories in order to help them provide important programs and services to low-income Canadians.

These transfers support health care services, post-secondary education, social assistance and social services, as well as programs for our children.

In 2011-12, the provinces and territories will receive \$11.5 billion in cash under the Canada social transfer and \$27 billion under the Canada health transfer. These amounts will increase by 3% and 6% respectively over the next few years.

In budget 2009, the government invested \$2.1 billion in the construction and renovation of social housing across Canada, including housing units for low-income seniors, people with disabilities and first nations people living on reserve.

In the latest budget, the government also announced a new guaranteed income supplement top-up benefit for Canada's most vulnerable seniors.

Since July 2011, seniors with little or no income other than the old age security pension and the guaranteed income supplement have been able to receive additional benefits of up to \$600 for single seniors and up to \$840 for couples per year. This measure will improve the financial security and well-being of more than 680,000 Canadian seniors.

Together, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement constitute Canada's largest federal social program, through which over \$36 billion in benefits are paid to about 5 million Canadian seniors.

Low-income seniors who receive the guaranteed income supplement and who have a job will now be able to keep more of their earnings.

In budget 2008, the government increased to \$3,500 the amount that can be earned before the guaranteed income supplement is reduced, so that GIS recipients will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money.

Thanks to our government's efforts to create jobs, to allow workers to keep more of their earnings and to help those who need it most, Canada has one of the lowest poverty rates among seniors out of the 33 OECD member countries. Our rate is lower than that of Australia at 27%, the United States at 24% and the United Kingdom at 10%.

Once fully implemented, PRPPs will play an important role in closing the income gap by promoting saving, while supporting a global investment process that will create wealth and move our economy forward.

Fortunately, when Bill C-25 passes, the provinces will have a model that is easy to apply to their respective frameworks, so that the system can be put to work for Canadians.

For all of these reasons, I encourage my colleagues to support the timely passing of Bill C-25 and our government's efforts to create a stronger, more prosperous and inclusive country for all Canadians.

• (1340)

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government sure spent a lot of time tooting its own horn in that speech, but I am not sure why it is so proud of itself. I believe I heard a couple of points about Bill C-25 that I would like to address quickly.

They say this program would not cost much. The first thing I would like to know is how they can be so sure that this kind of program will minimize costs. After 10 years in effect, the management fees of a similar program in Australia were about the same as other stock investment programs, such as mutual funds. To my knowledge, there is not a single scientific study or argument that clearly proves this will be the case.

*Government Orders*

Let us not forget that Canada pension plan management fees are less than 0.5%. Retirement plans that invest mainly in the stock market tend to have management fees in excess of 2%. Management fees for pooled registered pension plans will probably be pretty close to that.

The second thing I want to say is that we already have a lot of optional programs: TFSAs, RRSPs, group RRSPs. This is an optional program like the one proposed by the Liberals.

I would like to know how this program can meet the needs of the 70% of Canadians not currently contributing to an RRSP despite its attendant tax advantages.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his questions and I want to welcome him back to the House of Commons. I am quite pleased at his interest in our proposal for this pension plan.

When we talk about low cost it is important to remember one thing: when businesses can co-operate on pooling their purchasing power to reduce costs, it helps them to offer such a pension to all those who want to take advantage of the low cost. This purchasing power will help us tremendously in every province and territory, thanks to the program we are proposing today.

As far as the administrative costs the hon. member referred to are concerned, when provincial and territorial representatives spoke with our Minister of Finance, they strongly believed that the administrative costs would be quite low as a result of co-operation between the provinces and territories and the administrators. Purchasing power is a reason for that, as well.

I would like to reiterate that, through automatic enrollment, the people who will collect this pension will certainly be receiving benefits and advantages.

•(1345)

[*English*]

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the parliamentary secretary's remarks on the bill, but she failed to talk about the Prime Minister's latest bombshell, which is the government's plan to increase the age that seniors can draw OAS and GIS.

She knows that Bill C-25 only addresses a small part of the problem when it comes to pension concerns. She admitted that for Bill C-25 to work, it needs to be harmonized by the provinces. We know how that is working. Provinces are angered at the downloading of crime costs onto the provinces and the unilateral action of the government in terms of health care costs, so how does the government expect to get co-operation on this?

My question relates to what the parliamentary secretary signed onto in the latest finance committee report, which is that the federal government would not raise taxes or cut transfers to persons, including those for seniors and children. Will she admit that the Prime Minister's current proposal goes against that commitment she signed onto in the report? Will she admit that the Prime Minister's current proposal on increasing the number of years before people can draw those funds will cost families \$25,900 per year?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome my colleague from Malpeque back to the House. I am surprised he was able to hear anything I had to say because he continued to heckle the whole time I was trying to talk. I am surprised he was able to take anything from this.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote:** That's not true.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Here we go again, Mr. Speaker. If those members would give me a moment to finish what I am saying, it would be a much easier way to answer the member's questions.

First and foremost, the comments made by the member with regard to our Prime Minister are false. Frankly, I am quite shocked that he continues to perpetuate this kind of thing. Our Prime Minister has said very clearly that he intends to protect the income security of seniors. He intends to look at a long-term prosperity issue that is creeping up. He intends to make sure that we sustain these programs that are so vitally important to our seniors for generations to come. That is outside the scope of the PRPP.

The PRPP is what we are talking about today. It is a necessity to help the people who do not have pension plans through their employers to do something to save for their future. This is why the provinces are on board.

That member is insulting the provinces by suggesting they cannot harmonize things, that they cannot get along, that they cannot have discussions that are prudent and which lead to better things for our country. I am surprised that he would do that. It is important that we all work together. I would suggest he start doing so here in the House.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to be back in the House after our hiatus over the new year.

It is always a great pleasure to hear my colleague from Saint Boniface, Manitoba so clearly articulate our government's plan for jobs and growth.

The contrast between this side of the House and the other side could not be more stark. The parliamentary secretary spoke at length about the need to create wealth and all we hear from the other side is to spend, spend, spend. Creating wealth is vital to our country.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance tell us what she heard during the consultations regarding pooled registered pension plans?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Manitoba caucus on Parliament Hill, my colleague is a wealth of information and a joy to work with. I want to thank him for his dedication to this wonderful place and to his constituents. I want to take a moment to read a couple of quotes from stakeholders.

This is what Dan Kelly, the vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, had to say:



A new voluntary, low-cost and administratively simple retirement savings mechanism will allow more employers, employees, and the self-employed to participate in a pension plan. CFIB is particularly pleased that firms will be given a choice as to whether to register for or contribute to a PRPP.

This quote is from Yves-Thomas Dorval from the Conseil du patronat du Québec:

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

The flexibility of the PRPPs will allow federally regulated businesses (especially small and medium-sized businesses) that do not already have a pension plan to offer one to their employees in order to ensure their financial security at retirement.

[*English*]

I repeat that this is exactly what our Prime Minister has been focusing on, to provide income security to folks for their retirement. We are looking at all aspects. The PRPP would be a tremendous advantage to those 60% of employees who presently do not have an employee pension. We are going to continue to fight for these folks along with the provinces and territories which are unanimous in their support for this.

I just do not understand why we cannot get support from members of the opposition parties. They know clearly that this is the will of the provinces, the will of the territories, the will of the people of Canada, and yet they intend to stand in their way and put up barriers. I just do not understand why they continue to act in this manner.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Vancouver East.

I am pleased to announce that in 2012, LaSalle is celebrating its centennial. This 100th anniversary is an opportunity to acknowledge the effort, determination and entrepreneurial spirit of our predecessors, both those who are retired and those who have passed on, who built this city in the southwestern part of the Island of Montreal. This is my opportunity to acknowledge the seniors who chose to live there, work there and raise children there, those who contributed to the success of the businesses and neighbourhoods of LaSalle and who gave their names to streets and neighbourhoods. We could not celebrate the 100th anniversary of LaSalle this year without honouring its elders. The debt we owe to the seniors and retirees of LaSalle is also owed to those of Ville-Émard, the rest of southwestern Montreal and all of Canada.

It is in acknowledging the debt we owe to previous generations that I feel morally obliged to defend the accomplishments of our elders. The right to a comfortable and secure retirement is the cornerstone of the contract that ties younger generations to previous generations. It is that contract that I want to defend today by opposing Bill C-25 on pooled registered pension plans and by speaking out against the government's abandonment of our seniors who have contributed so much to our society.

Pooled registered pension plans will create retirement savings plans for self-employed workers and people working for companies that do not offer their employees a retirement savings plan. This bill has the support of the private sector because it will save businesses money. I recognize that businesspeople, companies and self-employed workers face financial dilemmas, but this plan will do

### *Government Orders*

very little to address the crisis hanging over Canada's retirement system. Similar plans in place in Australia for the past 10 years have produced disappointing results. The Canada pension plan is based on stable investments, while the stock market has plummeted 10%. A group of pension experts has asked the Minister of Finance and his provincial counterparts to enhance the Canada pension plan, as recommended by the NDP.

Clearly, the government's current solution is not the right one. The crisis, however, is real. People are living longer and longer, and that is a good thing, but it means that the savings we build up during our working lives have to last much longer. In 2007, only one Canadian in three could count on the stability of a supplemental pension plan. Only two Canadians in five have RRSPs. According to the former chief statistician, Michael Wolfson, half of all middle-class baby boomers will see their quality of life decline in retirement.

Retirees depend on the old age security programs to complement their personal savings. The government says that the costs associated with OAS will be astronomical by 2030. The crisis is real, and we need a solution now. The point I want to make today is that the current crisis has nothing to do with federal revenue, as the Prime Minister suggested recently in Davos.

Canada is near the bottom of the list of OECD countries in terms of the percentage of GDP it spends on public pensions.

• (1355)

[*English*]

As Tommy Douglas said so eloquently, for a country as rich as ours, that there are seniors living in poverty is an absolute disgrace.

[*Translation*]

The true roots of this crisis can be found in the growing inequality within Canadian society over the past few decades. This crisis was caused by the stagnation of wages among Canada's middle class, while the salaries of the wealthiest Canadians continued to rise during the same period.

Now middle class families are being asked to save even more, but with salaries that have not increased for decades and have definitely not kept pace with the cost of living.

Canadian families would all like to put some money aside for their retirement, but how can they with a debt rate of nearly 160%? Families are going into debt for the same reason that they cannot save: because they simply have less money.

The retirement crisis is also a moral crisis, because the Conservatives' ideology rejects the contract that ties young generations to older generations. That is the real crisis—a moral crisis.

[*English*]

There are 70,000 seniors living in my riding and thousands more are approaching the age of retirement. According to Statistics Canada, more than 14% of senior women on their own are living in poverty according to the standard measure.

*Statements by Members*

The sensible NDP proposal to increase the guaranteed income supplement is enough to eliminate poverty among seniors. The people of LaSalle—Émard demand to know, will the Prime Minister augment the age of retirement and ask Canadians in difficulty to wait still longer to get the income supplement they were promised a lifetime ago?

Friday morning one of my constituents wrote to my office. She agreed that I could read her letter. She told me that changing the minimum age from 65 to 67 would be unwise, because it would actually cost Canadians more since the change to the old age security would actually affect the poor rather than the rich. She said that the poor would not be able to take care of themselves properly, would cost more to the health system, would eat into their meagre investments, would get into welfare, and so on. She went on to say, “In the real world, not politics, have you tried to find a job at age 65, age 60, age 55, age 50? Are you aware of the reality of many people’s situation as they get older? Take my case. At the age of 58 I have been struggling more than two years trying to find permanent employment, drifting from one job to another, training to improve my chances, and now I am stricken with cancer. If it was not for my 65-year-old husband to help out financially and emotionally, where would I be?”

That is what a constituent wrote to me. How is that for a dose of reality? I thank this fellow citizen for having the courage to speak out and for allowing me to share her concerns with Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The debate on retirement reform conceals another much more profound debate: the one between Conservative ideology and a New Democratic vision of a society in which young people honour their debt to their parents.

In Davos, the Prime Minister shared his vision of Canada for future generations. Canadians will have to tighten their belts further and continue making sacrifices. That is the Conservative vision of a competitive yet anorexic Canada, the vision of a population that is impoverished by stagnating salaries and debt, the vision of a society in which everyone is left behind, in which seniors and sick people are regarded as a burden, the vision of a country that believes that wealth is created by making other people poor and by cutting essential services. This is the Conservative Party vision: a middle class that must constantly adjust to the market economy, that must say goodbye to any hopes and dreams that the Conservatives consider unrealistic or too costly.

In contrast, the NDP is proposing a Canada in which younger generations acknowledge everything that the older generations have done for them—the sacrifices that have been made for them and the education and love that they have been given. The NDP believes in a Canada in which everyone has equal opportunities, in which we reach out to help those who have fallen, a society that shares the wealth. That is the Canada that was built by previous generations. That is the Canada that we in the NDP want to pass on to our children. Together, let us build such a future.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

• (1400)

[*English*]

**LUNAR NEW YEAR**

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my best wishes to all Canadians who have recently celebrated the Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean Lunar New Year Tet and Spring Festival in Canada and around the world.

As many Canadians of Asian heritage gather with family and friends to mark the beginning of the new year I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on their accomplishments and all they wish to achieve in the new year in our great country. I encourage all Canadians to participate in the many new year’s festivities that will be celebrated across Canada.

I am pleased to see that our government is continuing to foster positive relationships between Canada and China, Taiwan, Vietnam and the Republic of Korea by expanding trade and cultural ties. Our government’s new year’s commitment is to continue working hard on the economy and to create the jobs and economic opportunities that will help ensure that the year of the dragon will indeed be a year of prosperity and well-being for all.

Happy new year.

*Xie Nien Kwai Le.*

*Chuc mung nam moi.*

*Gong Hey Fat Choy.*

*Sabok Mani Baduseyo.*

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 2011 was a bleak year for francophone communities across the country. This government repeatedly showed its utter contempt for protecting the French language.

To name a few examples: appointment of a unilingual Supreme Court justice; a unilingual Auditor General; several complaints filed with the Commissioner of Official Languages; studies dropped by the Standing Committee on Official Languages; announcement of a phoney committee to study the situation of French in federally regulated businesses, when the NDP introduced a bill for that very purpose; and more recently, the closure of the public service language training centre.

The Prime Minister, who promised to govern for all Canadians, has broken his promise, and francophones across the country are worried. Bilingualism is not a concept we can afford to disregard so blithely. Bilingualism must be protected through concrete actions.

It is high time for the government to follow the NDP’s example and show leadership on this issue.

[English]

#### RICHMOND HILL WINTER CARNIVAL

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the 44th annual Richmond Hill Winter Carnival is one of my riding's most anticipated events. This free, weekend-long family festival of entertainment and outdoor fun will take place February 3, 4, 5 at Richmond Hill's beautiful Mill Pond Park. Wagon rides, snowboard demonstrations, skydivers, ice carving displays, face painting and a spectacular War of 1812 outdoor re-enactment are just some of the activities to be enjoyed.

Even more amazing is that the winter carnival is run entirely by a dedicated group of local volunteers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the tireless efforts of committee chairs Chuck McClelland and Lynn Foster and their team of Karen, Ray, Michele, Doug, Cindy, Sarah, Jennifer, Arja, Anders, Chris, Jean, Lisa, Inge, Melanie, Robert, Ester and Noa, for a job well done.

I invite everyone in the House to join me and my constituents this weekend in Richmond Hill at Mill Pond Park.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

#### LUNAR NEW YEAR

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, bonne année chinoise.

[Member spoke in a foreign language]

[English]

This past Saturday the Chinese-Canadian Association of Kingston and District held its annual lunar new year's pot luck. Canadians of Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese heritage, with their families and friends, have been celebrating a year of hard work, the value of family, friends and community, and their hopes for the coming year.

As with many festivals around the world, people travel and gather together. Delicious meals are shared, family stories are recounted, grandparents spoil their grandchildren and then parents of young children like myself and my wife struggle to get their kids to say proper thank yous. Some things never change. Some things are the same everywhere.

To all Canadians, I offer this Chinese new year's wish:

[Member spoke in a foreign language]

[English]

May our country thrive and be prosperous, may our people live in peace and harmony.

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#### BLUE WATER BRIDGE CANADA

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to commemorate the exemplary service of Ken James, a former MP who represented the same riding I represent today and a man who has dedicated his life to serving the public.

Most recently, Mr. James served his country as the chair of the board of directors for Blue Water Bridge Canada, a role he filled

#### Statements by Members

from November 2007 until November 2011. Mr. James played a vital role in shaping the strategic planning initiative at Blue Water Bridge. Mr. James also oversaw an important period of revitalization at Blue Water Bridge, including the largest capital development program ever undertaken in the history of the organization.

Mr. James leaves very large shoes to fill. However, I know that he will always be willing to share his knowledge and expertise with his fellow community members. I wish to thank him here today, in Canada's House of Commons, for his vast dedication to Canada and his community. On behalf of Sarnia—Lambton, our thanks to Ken.

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#### SUDBURY STEELWORKERS HALL

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, four years after a tragic fire destroyed a vital part of Sudbury's history, a new Sudbury Steelworkers Hall has risen from the ashes.

Last week, I joined community and labour leaders for the grand opening of the state of the art Sudbury Steelworkers Hall. Its two halls, three classrooms and offices are now home to Local 6500. What we did at 92 Froot Road will continue at 66 Brady Street: labour schools, nomination meetings, weddings, community celebrations and charity work.

Present Thursday was Sudbury native Leo Gerard, now international president for the Steelworkers. Leo stood in the new hall, named after him, to remind us of our history. He said one of the things that always made him love his union was that it never saw itself as just a collective bargaining tool. Leo said, "We saw ourselves as an instrument of social and economic justice for our members and for our community. And we fought for the things that mattered for working people".

Congratulations go out to Leo, president Rick Bertrand and executive members of Local 6500. Good job.

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#### BARNEY MCCAFFREY

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the end of an era with the passing of Barney McCaffrey. Barney became an adopted son of the Ottawa Valley, eventually settling in the hills around Killaloe. He embraced the people of the Ottawa Valley and we embraced him.

Barney was a person who did not just talk the talk, he walked the walk. His early involvement in the Catholic worker movement eventually led him to the Madonna House Apostolate lay community in Combermere. As a devout Catholic, Barney celebrated life with a lifetime of concern for the less fortunate in our society.

*Statements by Members*

Barney eschewed the trappings of modern society, preferring to live a simple life. He lived life off the grid before it was fashionable.

Barney was not afraid to stand up to the man. I remember a regular newspaper column he wrote in a Barry's Bay newspaper called Bite Back. He called out the new head of the Liberal Party for trampling the rights of rural residents as a lobbyist for industrial wind turbines. Barney always stood up for the little guy, in everything he did.

I ask that Barney go in peace and be proud of how he is remembered.

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**SARAH BURKE**

**Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this month we received the tragic news that one of our own had suffered a serious injury while training in Park City, Utah. Sadly, only nine days later on January 19, we learned that Sarah Burke who was only 29 years of age had succumbed to her injuries.

A six-time gold medallist at the Winter X Games and world champion freestyle skier, Sarah was a pioneer and fierce advocate for her sport. She recently led the campaign that will see the superpipe competition debut at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, Russia, where Sarah surely would have been a gold medal contender for Canada.

I invite all hon. members to join with me and the legions of Canadians for whom Sarah was a role model and champion in keeping in our thoughts and prayers Sarah's husband Rory, her sister Anna, her parents Jan and Gordon, and their family and friends in Squamish, British Columbia and Midland, Ontario.

To Sarah, for the generation that she has inspired, for the memories that she leaves with us and for the spirit that lives on in our hearts, we thank her, we thank an outstanding Canadian.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

**LIVING WAGE HAMILTON**

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in my hometown of Hamilton 30,000 people do not earn enough income from their jobs to keep them above the poverty line. The situation is even worse for women, aboriginals and members of visible minority groups who disproportionately make up the working poor. Undaunted, last month a coalition of community partners including the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, the Social Planning and Research Council, McMaster Community Poverty Initiative and the Hamilton Training Advisory Board launched Living Wage Hamilton.

Living Wage Hamilton will work with employers in the private, non-profit and public sectors to encourage them to develop and adopt policies that will pay a wage that allows people to do more than just meet minimum basic needs. It will provide for a decent quality of life for workers and their families. It will also provide benefits to businesses and the community as a whole.

I want to congratulate Living Wage Hamilton for its leadership on the issue of poverty reduction. I am hopeful that businesses and

community associations will work together to ensure that everyone in Hamilton has a living—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

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**TANKER TRAFFIC**

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the interim Liberal leader has joined the MP for Vancouver Quadra in calling for a job-killing tanker traffic ban off the B.C. coast.

Let us be clear. There is no ban now, nor will there be a ban on tanker traffic under our Conservative government. We oppose the implementation of a reckless job-killing ban on B.C. tanker traffic.

During the past five years, over 1,300 tankers arrived at the port of Vancouver and nearly 200 at the ports of Prince Rupert and Kitimat. They all did so safely.

Our government will continue to enforce strong environmental and safety standards right across this country, including those on tanker traffic.

Our government's top priority remains the economy and job creation. The Liberals and the NDP want to kill job opportunities for Canadian families. However, the Conservatives want to create jobs for Canadians and their families.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**RESPECTING THE VOTERS' CHOICE**

**Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the last election, Canadians voted to put an end to the old ways of doing politics in Canada and to change things in Ottawa. During the break, the voters of Saint-Maurice—Champlain were the losers in the same old political games even though they were among the 4.5 million Canadians who voted for change.

One of the fundamental principles of our representative democracy is the trust placed by voters in those who represent them. When politicians breach this trust, they show contempt for the voters and they fuel people's cynicism about politicians.

We should remind ourselves that our ridings do not belong to us; they belong to the voters. The NDP has been clear: if members wish to cross the floor, they should first ask the voters. Our bill to respect the voters' choice would make this mandatory. Voters who have placed their trust in us deserve no less.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NDP leadership contestants gathered for a debate on families. What families heard was a lot about expensive and unaffordable new government programs. They heard no practical measures that would help Canadian families who are working to get ahead. The NDP would create disaster for Canadian families and be a threat to their financial well-being.

[Translation]

The NDP poses a threat to the great advantages provided by the universal child care benefit. The member for Parkdale—High Park has said that this direct assistance to parents is poorly-spent money. The NDP would prefer that everything be controlled by a bureaucracy.

• (1415)

[English]

Other schemes are no better. Candidates like the members for Skeena—Bulkley Valley and Outremont are promising a cap and trade carbon tax. This would increase the costs for gas, electricity and nearly everything else.

Higher gas prices, higher taxes, ending choice in child care and a less prosperous Canada are the—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**2012 NHL ALL-STAR GAME**

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to wish everyone a happy new year. I extend my best wishes for good health and happiness.

[English]

Now let us talk about the 2012 National Hockey League All-Star weekend just held in Ottawa.

Ottawa was proud to host the celebratory game. Kudos to Alfredsson and his team. Kudos also to the folks involved, the league, the Senators hockey team, the Governor General, the city, the convention centre, the volunteers and the fans who made our city a destination.

The residents of Ottawa have demonstrated once again how welcoming we are. The entire weekend was a great experience for thousands of tourists and locals. They also got to meet NHL stars and see the Stanley Cup. The entire city came alive.

[Translation]

Hockey teams, no matter where they are based, experience highs and lows. This is also the case in politics. The important thing is to keep the team spirit and sense of camaraderie alive and to skate for the puck. One thing is for certain: on the weekend, everyone in Ottawa was a big winner.

[English]

Let us see this famous weekend once again in the not too distant future.

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**SEALING INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in an effort to downplay his long-term opposition to the Canadian sealing industry, the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl last week borrowed a sealskin vest and wore it around. This photo op has not distracted from the fact that the NDP's downtown agenda has not overcome the interests and the concerns of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The NDP does not care about the priorities of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador but rather the priorities of left-wing radicals who have declared war on one of Canada's oldest industries, the Canadian seal hunt.

Last Tuesday, the member mused about the end of the Canadian seal hunt. This is not the first time he has made comments like that. Canadian sealers were disgusted by his comments.

Frank Pinhorn of the Canadian Sealers Association said:

I thought that he would represent the interest of the hard-working sealer, the hard-working commercial fishermen...

The people from Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as all Canadians from coast to coast, care about the Canadian sealing industry. We will stand up and fight for it at home and abroad.

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**PRESIDENT OF THE TREASURY BOARD**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it seems that the only time Canadians can believe the President of the Treasury Board is when he is not saying anything because every excuse he comes up with for how he blew that \$50 million it is like he tweets himself into a bigger hole.

We now know that he ran the 242 projects through his office. We now know that he signed the letters of rejection to cut that down to 32. So, the “Oops, sorry, Auditor General, the dog ate the paper trail” just does not cut it. Neither does the excuse, “Talk to my big brother at Foreign Affairs; he will cover up for me”. Or, my favourite whopper of them all, which is, “If I ran a parallel process, I would turn myself over to the cops”.

He did run a parallel process. Now that he is leading the reckless attacks on the pensions and services Canadians rely on, will he admit that he misled the Auditor General, will he cough up the paper trail and will he apologize to the Canadian public for the misuse of their money?

*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY**

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week in Switzerland, the Prime Minister highlighted Canada's economic strengths and framed the choices Canada faces as we work to secure long-term prosperity for our citizens.

Our top priority is jobs and economic growth. Canada will make the transformations necessary to sustain economic growth and prosperity now and for the future. We will continue to keep taxes low, to make key investments in science and technology to sustain a competitive economy and to advance our trade linkages. We will make it a national priority to ensure that we have the capacity to export our energy products beyond the United States, specifically to Asia. We will undertake significant reform of our immigration system, balancing our humanitarian obligations with family reunification and with economic and labour force needs.

We will be taking measures in the coming months to ensure the sustainability of our social programs and fiscal position.

Canada's choice will be to seize and to master our future and to be a model of confidence, growth and prosperity in the 21st century.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

• (1420)

[English]

**GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS**

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are bracing themselves for the deepest round of cuts since Paul Martin, cuts to services Canadians need, like the OAS and EI. These cuts will hurt people, hurt seniors, hurt jobs and hurt our communities.

When will the Prime Minister tell Canadians the bad news, on his next trip to Switzerland or somewhere else in the world?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government received a mandate to gradually reduce our deficit to zero. We will do that while protecting the social programs that Canadians cherish. That has been the commitment we have made to the Canadian people. At the same time, we will ensure that our vital programs are sustainable for the long term and for future generations.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister went to Switzerland to tell a millionaires' club that the Conservatives are planning to slash old age security benefits. That is offensive and insulting to seniors. Rather than tackling poverty among seniors, the Conservatives are attacking seniors themselves.

Why does the Prime Minister want to cut old age security benefits? Why?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not at all the case. Let me be clear: we do not intend to cut benefits for seniors. On the contrary, we will protect our seniors. At the same time, we will ensure that the retirement income

system remains sustainable for all Canadians and for future generations.

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think that answered my question.

We know full well that the next budget will be about choices. The government could choose to help seniors and strengthen the pension system, but instead, it will continue to give big companies tax cuts. Billions of dollars have been and will be spent on megaprisons and F-35s that do not work, and seniors will end up footing the bill. That shows a real lack of respect for our seniors who have given so much to Canadians.

Seniors want to know why this government is putting them on the chopping block first. Why make that choice?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the NDP leader did not listen to my answer. The truth is that we are not cutting seniors' programs. On the contrary, we will reduce the deficit to zero, as we promised during the election campaign, without cutting seniors' benefits. At the same time, we will ensure that the retirement income system remains sustainable for future generations.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if this continues, it will be *Goodbye, Charlie Brown*, that is for sure, because this government cares more about CEOs than it does about seniors and families. It has given the gift of additional generous tax cuts to large corporations, which are already raking in huge amounts of money.

This is the same government that is telling seniors that there is not enough money to allow them to retire in dignity. Seniors can no longer trust this government.

Why is it giving more presents to CEOs, while shutting out seniors and families? Why is it betraying Canada's seniors?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is completely false. What we plan to do is protect the retirement system in place for our seniors, the people who built this great country. But we must ensure that this system will be there for future generations. We will protect those generations and our retirement system.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is saying that they will do to pensions what they did to Service Canada.

*Oral Questions*

The government is choosing to spend billions on a misguided prison agenda and tax giveaways to profitable corporations while planning to cut billions from old age security and the services Canadians rely on at the same time as a quarter of a million seniors in Canada live in poverty and hundreds of thousands of Canadian families are out of work and struggle just to get by. Seniors cannot trust the government.

If the Prime Minister was so concerned about cutting OAS, why did he not say anything about it during the election? Why did he hide his agenda during the last election campaign?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has it all wrong. We are not cutting. What we are going to do is preserve the system that exists for Canadians, the retirement system that already exists. Seniors will not lose a penny.

However, we need to ensure that going forward we have a sustainable system. The old age security system is not sustainable now. We will make it sustainable for generations in the future.

• (1425)

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Prime Minister did address this question during the election campaign. The Prime Minister stated categorically during the leaders' debate and as recently as November that the government would not be touching transfers to individuals and transfers to seniors. He explicitly said that.

Now the minister comes up with the Davos answer.

There is an election answer and a Davos answer. Which is it? Is the Prime Minister committed to sustaining seniors or is he committed to breaking his election promises and breaking faith with the people of Canada? Which is it?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government ran on very clear commitments and we are acting on those commitments. Our commitment is to reduce our deficit to zero gradually without cutting transfers to individuals or to provinces. That has been very clear.

At the same time, we do have the opportunity to look ahead, to look at the challenges that these programs face in the future and to ensure that these programs will be available and viable for the future generations that need them.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada cannot have it both ways.

On exactly the same day as the Prime Minister was giving his statement in Davos, the President of the Treasury Board was reassuring everyone that there would be no cuts to the provinces and there would be no cuts to transfers to individual seniors.

What the Prime Minister is saying today and what we are hearing very clearly from the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development is the exact opposite.

It is the Davos renege. It is the politics of deceit and abandonment that—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, the leader of the Liberal Party is challenged when it comes to listening to the answer. We have been very clear that as we reduce the deficit, we will not be cutting transfers to either the provinces or individuals.

At the same time, everybody understands that there are demographic realities that do threaten the viability of these programs over the longer term. We will ensure that these programs are funded and viable for the future generations that will need them.

[Translation]

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my ability to listen to the answers is not the problem. The problem is that the answers change. It depends on what is happening. If it is an election period, we hear a lot of promises.

The demographic shift did not happen overnight. The demographic shift was a factor during the election, and that is when they made their promises. Not just the Prime Minister, but every member of the Conservative Party made exactly the same promises. That is why we are calling it the politics of abandonment and deceit.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if we are talking about deceit, let us talk about the Liberal Party's record. The Liberals made record cuts in transfers to the provinces and individuals.

Our government's commitment is clear: we are going to eliminate the deficit without cutting transfers to either the provinces or individuals. At the same time, we have a responsibility to future generations to ensure that these programs are viable in the future, and that is what we will do.

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[English]

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives failed in their commitment to the 2004 health accords, including expanding home care, reforming primary care and getting prescription drug costs under control.

Now the Prime Minister has made the situation worse by telling the premiers that he will unilaterally reduce the Canada health transfer.

Fixing our health care system must be done by collaborating with the provinces. That is what Canadians expect. Why is the government slamming the door in their faces?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as stated before, our government is committed to a universal, publicly-funded health care system. Unlike the previous Liberal government, which gutted health care transfers, we have actually increased funding to record levels.

We have also announced a long-term, stable funding arrangement with the provinces and the territories that will see transfers reach historic levels of \$40 billion by the end of the decade.

*Oral Questions*

●(1430)

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives cannot escape the reality that their take it or leave it ultimatum is in direct opposition to the principles of the Canada Health Act. Canadians are rightly worried that it will lead to greater privatization, undermining the foundation of medicare. Canadians do not want to see one health care system for the wealthy and one for everyone else.

I ask again, why is the government abandoning its leadership role in health care and making Canadians pay the price? What happened to its commitment to accountability?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as indicated by the recent data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the federal transfers are projected to grow faster than average provincial spending on health care.

I will continue to work with my provincial and territorial colleagues to make sure that Canada's health system is more sustainable, and to improve accountability and deliver better services to Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have reason to fear the next Conservative budget because the cuts announced could be double what is expected.

The President of the Treasury Board, a man known for his great transparency, is talking about cuts of 10% resulting in the loss of \$8 billion in public services. This government simply does not understand the reality. Blindly cutting the budget is not the solution. Eliminating good jobs is not the solution. Reducing the quality of services is not the solution.

Why is this government going to continue to make families and workers pay for six years of poor Conservative management?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave our government a solid mandate to make decisions on their behalf and to appraise the situation.

[English]

I would say to the hon. member that with this mandate, as the Prime Minister has said today, we have and are working on a plan that will get us to balance within a reasonable period of time. It is a reasonable and fair plan for Canadians as well as this House to consider.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I did not miss the Conservatives' vacuous answers.

We can already see that their irresponsible cuts are having devastating consequences. We need only think of those held hostage

in the labyrinths of Immigration Canada or those who have just lost their jobs and will have to wait weeks for their benefits.

The government and the honourable member should understand that a false majority does not give them the right to make cuts to the majority of programs. Why does this government continue to reward big businesses that are already profitable and do not create jobs in Canada rather than maintaining the services that Canadians need?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, we must have an action plan for the cuts in order to reduce the deficit. We spoke about this action plan in the previous election. It was part of our 2011 budget. This country must have an action plan.

[English]

If we are going to have a low tax jurisdiction for jobs and growth, these plans are necessary, but we will do so in a reasonable and fair manner.

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**SERVICE CANADA**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the current government has money for its friends, but not for ordinary Canadians. While the Prime Minister is musing about cutting benefits to seniors, cuts to Service Canada are already hurting Canadian seniors. Some Canadians are waiting six to eight months just to get their CPP or old age security. They do not have eight months of savings in the bank. They cannot pay for food and they cannot pay for their medications. Why does the government want to make the problems worse by cutting more services to Canadians?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are trying to make sure that all Canadians get the benefits to which they are entitled in a very timely manner. Now it helps if people submit their applications on time, that these are complete and are accurate. It also helps if the employers—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The minister has the floor.

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it also helps if the employers do the same. We are working to ensure that we get the processing done as quickly as possible. That is why we have brought in an additional 400 people to help that process along so that people do get the benefits they need and deserve.



*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what is absolutely shameful is the government's cuts to services that Canadians depend on. It is not just unemployed Canadians and seniors who are hurting, but Canadian businesses as well. Service Canada is unable to process labour market opinions in time for companies that need temporary foreign workers. Many companies have to pay to have their application processed twice, or they have to send their foreign workers home. Why will the government not acknowledge the problems it is causing and reverse these cuts?

• (1435)

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was not too long ago that the NDP was complaining that we were allowing temporary foreign workers in at all.

What we are trying to do is to protect the integrity of that system to make sure that people who do come are not replacing Canadians who could have those jobs instead. We are also trying to make sure that temporary foreign workers who come in are coming for legitimate jobs so that they are not going to be abused.

We want to protect those workers, and we want to protect Canadians. That is why we are making sure that we take the time to make sure the jobs are real and the applicants are real as well.

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**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, instead of working with the provinces to make our streets and communities safer, the Conservatives are forcing their ineffective and costly prisons agenda on Canadians, costing Ontario taxpayers, for example, \$1 billion alone.

Why will the government not work with the provinces instead of downloading costs? Does it not agree with New Democrats that the pensions and services that Canadians rely on every day have a higher priority than the billions being spent on its prisons agenda?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are so many inaccuracies in there, I do not know where to begin.

I might as well begin at the beginning, which is that Ontario has had its payments from the federal government increased by 77% or \$8.4 billion since we have taken office. We all have a responsibility to stand up for victims, and that is exactly what this government is doing and we want the support of everyone.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this government could not care less about Canadian families, the provinces or the territories. This is a "my way or you get no highway" government that obviously did not spend any time during the break talking to Quebecers about their priorities. If it had, it would know that Quebecers want nothing to do with the government's ill-advised crime bill.

Instead of working with Quebec to amend the bill, the government is offloading the cost of an ineffective prison system that will cost Quebec alone \$600 million.

Will the government stop playing political games and work with the provinces to fix this bill?

[*English*]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is talking about the bill that is before Parliament, this bill targets drug dealers, drug traffickers, gangs and those who would molest and abuse children. That is the focus of the bill.

With respect to costs, as I pointed out before, more than \$2.4 billion has been added to the transfers to the provinces. We are doing our part. I would remind the hon. member that it is victims who suffer the most from crime. They pay the greatest price. The members opposite sometimes seem to forget that.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again the Conservative government has shown its disdain for the French language by cutting 190 instructor positions at the Canada School of Public Service. These cuts are just the latest in a long line of attacks on francophone institutions, such as the Official Languages Centre of Excellence. It makes absolutely no sense.

How can the government claim that all citizens will receive services in the official language of their choice if it gets rid of French language instruction?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not at all true. There are many French- and English-language instruction programs available. That is still one of our responsibilities to our fellow citizens just as it has been in the past.

[*English*]

The only change has been that we have continued the practice of our Liberal government predecessors of outsourcing that kind of language training to those who can provide it on an excellent basis to more people at less cost.

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**PENSIONS**

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Conservatives threatened to pickpocket seniors by raising the old age pension qualifying age.

This so-called cost-cutting measure was announced after the Conservatives gave \$6 billion to large corporations, \$30 billion for untended jets, and another billion for fake lakes and glow sticks.

Paying for these kinds of extravagant things on the backs of Canada's seniors is ridiculous and shameful. Seniors are then going to be forced to line up at food banks and soup kitchens. We have all heard those stories before.

*Oral Questions*

Is that what the Prime Minister meant when he said that he was going to change the face of Canada? Shame on every one of the Conservative members.

•(1440)

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, shame on the hon. member for fearmongering on baseless statements.

We made a commitment to Canadians in the last election that we would look after them in their old age, that we would respect the current system. The Canada pension plan is fully viable. It has been actuarially evaluated and it is viable.

However, our old age security system is not. We want to make sure that for generations to come, people can rely on the old age security system to help them out. So we are going to make changes, but they will not include cuts to people who are currently receiving those funds.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, last week in Davos, the Prime Minister told us about his vague plans to change the Canada pension plan and old age security. More than half of all Canadians are counting on the federal plan, and the Prime Minister is disregarding their needs.

Today I would like the Prime Minister to tell us what his real intentions are with respect to the millions of Canadians who rely solely on the Canada pension plan and old age security for their income.

[English]

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals are so worried about seniors and their income, then why did they vote not once but twice against increasing the GIS exemption? Why did they vote against pension income splitting for seniors? Why did they vote against so many things that can help to take so many seniors off the tax rolls and out of poverty?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it was cruel for the Conservatives to deny low income seniors the family caregiver tax credit. It would be heartless to force low income seniors onto provincial welfare rolls by raising the age of OAS from 65 to 67. The fact is that 40% of seniors receiving OAS make less than \$20,000 per year.

While other countries are trying to address the issue of income inequality, the gap between rich and poor, why are the Conservatives here in Canada making income inequality worse? Why the war on the poor?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, why is it that the Liberals voted against pension income splitting for seniors? Why is it that they voted against increasing the age credit limit not once but twice? Why is it—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. minister has the floor and members will give her their attention. The hon. Minister of Human Resources.

**Hon. Diane Finley:** Mr. Speaker, why is it that the Liberals voted against the largest increase in the guaranteed income supplement? That is the funding that goes to the poorest of our seniors. Why did they vote against that too?

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[Translation]

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today we learned that Australia is thinking about delaying its purchase of the F-35 fighter jets. The reasons for this are clear: the jet will not be ready in time, the costs of the project are skyrocketing and technical difficulties are mounting.

I can say from experience that soldiers always have a plan B, in case things do not go as planned. But this government does not even respect the basic principles taught to our soldiers.

Why does the minister still not have a plan B?

[English]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Royal Canadian Air Force has flown CF-18s for 30 years. We are working with our allies to replace our aging aircraft with new state of the art F-35s, which will protect international stability for decades to come.

Australia faces an immediate challenge in replacing older aircraft much sooner, as we have been doing.

We will continue to closely monitor the international development of the F-35 and its capabilities for the Canadian Forces.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, any minister who says that everything is fine with the F-35 project is denying the facts and mismanaging the file. The United States, the United Kingdom and Australia are all reviewing their programs. If I were in the minister's position, any one problem with the F-35s would have prompted me to come up with a plan B just in case. Yet, despite all the problems, this minister still does not have a plan B.

When will the minister come back to earth and tell us his plan B?

•(1445)

[English]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know where all this rhetoric is coming from other than desperation.

Our government is committed to getting the best equipment for our Canadian Forces at the best price for Canadians with the best benefits for Canadian companies and Canadian workers. Canada's participation in the development of the F-35, along with our closest allies, ensures that the Canadian Forces will have the best equipment to achieve mission success.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in spite of cost overruns and mounting technical problems, we left off in 2011 with the minister sticking to the same old story on the F-35.

Since then the U.S. has come to grips with reality. It has cancelled 179 planes and has delayed production of the rest. The Australians, having already downsized their order once, are thinking of doing it again.

With everyone else pulling the chute on this plane, will the minister tell us how much more the F-35s will now cost Canadians?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are monitoring the events very closely with all of our nation partners as well. Just as a sideline, that very member back in December talked about some report he read where there was supposed to be no training for F-35 Canadian pilots here. That “no” referred to Norway. The member does not even know what he is talking about.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after six weeks away and in light of such significant changes, Canadians were expecting the minister to have something more to say on this issue. Around the world, countries are taking a realistic look at the F-35 and cutting back on their orders even in the U.S. Now I value hope and optimism, but here we have crossed over to a world of fantasy.

Are the F-35s the government ordered somehow special? Are they different from those being rejected by other countries? How are our jets on track, while the rest of the world's are falling off the rails?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely wrong. The truth of the matter is that we welcome the announcement by the United States, which confirms its commitment to the multinational Joint Strike Fighter. Canada remains committed to the development of the new state-of-the-art aircraft that our brave men and women agree will give them the best probability of mission success well into the 21st century.

We continue to monitor the progress of the multinational Joint Strike Fighter program closely and exercise responsible stewardship of taxpayer money.

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**JUSTICE**

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned about crime and the reaction I have heard from my constituents regarding yesterday's verdict in the so-called honour killings of four women in Kingston confirms this very fact. We now know that the Shafia sisters, along with Rona Amir Mohammed, were killed because they were women, women who wanted nothing more than to live their lives according to Canadian values, free from oppression and free from violence.

As Justice Maranger said yesterday, “it is difficult to conceive of a more heinous, more despicable, more honourless crime than killing your own children for no other reason than some perverted sense of honour”.

Could the Minister of Justice please provide the House with our government's view of the so-called—

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

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear. So-called honour killings are barbaric, unacceptable and have no place in Canada. We are committed to protecting women and other vulnerable persons from all forms of violence and to hold offenders accountable for their acts.

In Canada murder is murder regardless of the motive. Our government has always focused primarily on the rights of victims and not on the twisted rationale offered by convicted murderers. We send the message loudly and clearly that if people commit such terrible acts of violence in Canada, they will face Canadian justice.

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[*Translation*]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Minister of Natural Resources, Canadians who publicly express their concerns about the Northern Gateway pipeline are radicals. This is not the 19th century. The radical thing would be to not care about the environment.

When will the minister stop attacking the Canadians and first nations who want to protect the environment and stop taking his orders from the oil lobby?

• (1450)

[*English*]

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are responsible environmental groups that contribute to the discussion of the use and development of our natural resources. However, there are also some radical environmental groups that are opposed to any development of our resources. They are using the process to delay projects as long as possible with the objective of killing them. We want an independent review that will be open, that will do a scientific analysis, that will hear all the people who have a legitimate view, but thousands of jobs are at stake and the—

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

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we really do have a minister for the 19th century. The Minister of Natural Resources fails to understand the impact of Conservative inaction on jobs, on the environment and on future generations. Instead, he attacks people who actually care about the environment. It makes me wonder if the minister actually believes in climate change.

Is the minister a believer or a denier?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since we are into theology, I will tell the House that I believe that no project in Canada should go ahead unless it is safe for Canadians and safe for the environment. However, groups that are opposed to any development of hydrocarbons, groups that say that the oil sands, which represent 1/1000th of global emissions, will result in the destruction of the planet, these groups are not related to science. These groups are radical. These groups fight against—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first nations and Métis have called on the government to address impacts of the proposed Gateway pipeline on their rights and resources. Pleas for federal intervention to protect aboriginal communities impacted by energy projects have fallen on deaf ears for decades. First nations impacted by oil sands developments are tired of waiting for promised regulation, monitoring and health studies.

Instead of pushing the speed dial on these megaprojects, why will the government not take action to defend aboriginal rights and title?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the federal framework for aboriginal economic development, our government is working in partnership with first nations, provincial and municipal governments and industrial developers to help first nations and Métis communities secure social and economic developments from the oil sands development.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister would like to come up to Fort Chipewyan with me and have that discussion.

Following last week's crown-first nations gathering, the government promised to expedite resolution of land claims and to deliver multi-year financing for first nation governance. Expedited action is required to address long-standing inequities in education, housing, infrastructure. First nations are tired of spending their money, suing the government for failed delivery of commitments on treaty and law.

Will the government deliver on these promises in this year's budget and in this year's legislative agenda?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we made great strides at the crown-first nations gathering. Our government is committed to moving beyond the constraints of the Indian Act. For example, I was proud to announce last week the addition of 18 first nations to the first nations land management regime and to sign the framework agreement for self-government negotiations with the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan. There is more to follow, real results.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that allows me to ask the Prime Minister a question with respect to the Enbridge project and the position of the first nations communities that are affected by that project. The National Energy Board review does not

actually have complete jurisdiction with respect to first nations issues.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister in particular if he contemplates some additional process that will involve a direct crown-first nations discussion with respect to the impact of this project on first nations.

● (1455)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader of the Liberal Party should understand that consulting with aboriginal groups is a constitutional requirement. Of course, that is part of any process. At the same time, I have to reiterate what I have said to Canadians before. It is vitally important to the national interests of this country that we are able to export our energy products to Asia and, obviously, that is something the government hopes will happen in the future.

[Translation]

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** If the federal government's position is that it is required to consult aboriginal groups, I would like the Prime Minister to tell us how it is fulfilling this requirement when witnesses are attacked in court by both the Minister of Natural Resources and the Prime Minister. I see two different approaches by the government.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Constitution requires us to consult aboriginal groups and the government will respect this requirement. At the same time, I have said several times that it is vital for Canada to sell its energy products to Asia. That part of the world has the greatest economic growth. It is important. The government's position on environmental and other processes is that it is up to Canadians to decide their own future.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the situation at the White Birch Paper plant is a flagrant example of the Conservatives' inaction when it comes to employment. The need to strengthen the Investment Canada Act is pressing because Canadian workers can no longer afford to pay for this government's ineffectiveness. Thousands of jobs have disappeared in the manufacturing and forestry sectors and this government is doing nothing about it.

Are the Conservatives going to keep claiming that everything is just fine? What are they waiting for to take action and finally protect high-quality jobs in Canada?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first, the dispute between White Birch Paper and its employees is a labour relations problem that has to be settled by the parties involved and we hope it will be settled. The NDP is trying to confuse matters and is opposed to any form of foreign investment. When we presented our economic action plan, in which there were significant investments to enhance Canadian innovation, the NDP voted against it. They have no credibility on that side of the House when it comes to job growth and the economy.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the situation is just as bad in Montreal, where appliance manufacturer Mabe Canada has announced the closure of its plant. As a result: 700 high-quality jobs have disappeared. The very day of this sad announcement, the Prime Minister was in Davos to brag about the strength of Canadian economy.

That same region was hit by the closure of the Shell refinery a few years ago. If the Prime Minister thinks the economic situation in Montreal East is so great, then instead of going to Davos, why does he not come to Hochelaga and explain that to the employees of Mabe Canada who have just been laid off?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is incredible. I was talking about the economic action plan in which there were significant amounts of money to enhance innovation across Canada. The NDP is lamenting the closure of the Shell refinery in Montreal, but it opposes energy development.

When it comes time for investing in infrastructure for education, in aerospace or in F-35s, which have colossal spinoffs for Montreal, what does the NDP do? It votes against that investment. Now it is trying to teach us a lesson in the House. It is unbelievable.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PENSIONS**

**Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in this time of global economic uncertainty, Canadians are concerned about being able to save for their retirement. If the NDP had its way, it would double CPP contributions, meaning increased payroll taxes on small and medium—

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

● (1500)

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would ask members to hold off on their applause until the member has finished asking her question.

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Mr. Speaker, this would mean increased payroll taxes on small and medium-sized business.

In this time of global economic uncertainty, imposing a tax on our key job creators is just irresponsible.

Could the Minister of State for Finance please tell the House what the government has done to help Canadians better plan for their retirement?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague from Winnipeg South Centre has been communicating with her constituents and helping them with some solutions on preparing for their retirement goals.

Today in the House of Commons we are debating a new piece of legislation, the pooled registered pension plan, a very accessible plan, accessible to all Canadians.

Businesses are looking forward to this because 60% of Canadians today in the workforce do not have access to that pension plan. We are providing that option and I hope the—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for St. Paul's.

\* \* \*

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, education is the essential ingredient for success, yet the federal government funds education for first nations children on reserve at two-thirds the national average for children off reserve.

First nations children deserve an equal chance. Will the government commit to ending the unacceptable discrimination in funding for first nations education in the upcoming budget, or will first nations be forced to go to court to sue for equal funding, as Cindy Blackstock has had to do for child welfare?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work proactively and collaboratively with first nations, provinces and the private sector to support programs and services to support students' success, access to jobs, and strong, healthy communities.

It is too early to speculate about the budget. That is a decision that will be forthcoming.

\* \* \*

**INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Electro-Motive Diesel got \$5 million in tax breaks from the government through its generous corporate tax plan giveaway. After the photo op, EMD decided to cut workers' salaries in half, slash their benefits, and threatened to ship Canadian jobs overseas.

Why is the government irresponsibly handing out billions in no-strings-attached tax giveaways and turning its back on workers in London, Ontario? EMD is the only producer of locomotives in this country. When will the government step up to the plate in the interests of Canadians and Canadian workers?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is a sad situation, but this is a labour dispute between a private company and a union. We have been briefed by local Conservative MPs on this situation. We are all concerned about workers and their families, but this matter is under the Ontario government's jurisdiction and the federal government cannot interfere in that matter.

*Routine Proceedings***SEALING INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl shocked the entire province of Newfoundland and Labrador by once again calling for an end to the sealing industry in Canada. Not only are his comments an insult to the families whose livelihoods depend on the hunt, but they are also an attack on the coastal and northern communities that depend on a sustainable and humane seal hunt. A photo op of the member in a seal vest does not fool anyone.

Would the regional minister for Newfoundland and Labrador please explain to the House what our government is doing to defend Canada's sealing industry?

**Hon. Peter Penashue (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week the member opposite shocked Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with his comments, but I was not shocked. I know the member has been an opponent of the sealing industry for years.

While the NDP plays politics with the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians our government stands up for the sealing industry at home and abroad.

And, yes, Mr. Speaker, I own my vest.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said on more than one occasion that he supports the democratic aspirations of Tunisians, but this government dragged its feet for a year before seizing the assets of members of the Ben Ali clan in Canada. Now we have learned that Canada wants to keep half the profits. That is disgusting.

Does the Prime Minister really want to profit from a corrupt dictatorship? Why not give the money back to the Tunisians to help them build their democracy?

• (1505)

[English]

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has been very clear in reference to Tunisia. We have stated quite clearly that we would be seizing the assets of those who have stolen from the people. This House has passed very strong regulations to ensure that dictators will not steal from their people. The money will go back to the people as it is rightfully theirs.

This government is working very hard to ensure that those moneys that were stolen from the people of Tunisia will be returned to the Tunisian people.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PENSIONS**

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, the Prime Minister announced

that major reforms to the pension plan are one of his government's top priorities. Everyone knows that when the Prime Minister says "reform", he means drastic cuts.

How can this government justify trying to save money on the backs of our most vulnerable seniors, when it has no problem purchasing fighter jets, finding the money to celebrate the Queen of England and giving billions of dollars in tax breaks to large corporations?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not at all true. As I have already said today, our government will ensure that seniors keep all of the benefits they are currently receiving under the existing system. We will not cut a single penny. We are going to maintain today's system for generations to come.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Ted Morton, Minister of Energy for Alberta.

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

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development might want to reconsider her remarks and apologize for attacking EI recipients for being unable to fill out their forms.

**The Speaker:** That is not a point of order. If the member wants to bring that up in a future question period, he might have that opportunity.

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 142 petitions.

\* \* \*

**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask for support for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of any Standing Order, for the remainder of 2012, when a recorded division is to be held on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, except recorded divisions deferred to the conclusion of oral questions, the bells to call in the Members shall be sounded for not more than thirty minutes.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. Chief Government Whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

## PETITIONS

### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of people who want to see the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which is being overfunded at \$1.1 billion per annum, sold.

● (1510)

### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, welcome back to the House. I am very happy to rise on the first day back to present two petitions.

The first petition is signed by concerned residents in Surrey. They are very concerned about federal pharmaceutical policies that they believe have been a total failure, with many Canadians not having equitable access to medicines. They note that Canada is the third most expensive country for brand-name drugs. The petitioners call on Parliament to follow the recommendations of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' case for universal medicare, developing and implementing legislation for universal public pharmacare.

### CANADA CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY ACT

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition has many pages and is signed by people who are very concerned right across the country. I want to congratulate people for the work they have done in going out and collecting signatures and signing this petition.

The petitioners point out that every year hundreds of thousands of dogs and cats are brutally slaughtered for their fur in a number of Asian regions.

The petitioners call on Canada to join the U.S., Australia and the European Union in banning the import and sale of dog and cat fur. They point out that Canada is the only developed country without such a ban. They further call on us to introduce and support legislation to amend the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act and the Textile Labelling Act based on Bill C-296 from the 41st Parliament, a bill that we currently have in this Parliament.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. The first petition is on climate change, our most pressing environmental issue, which requires moral and intergenerational responsibility. Climate change may cost Canadians \$21 billion to \$43 billion by 2050.

### Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are asking that Canada sign and implement a binding international agreement to ensure global average temperatures stay below 2°C, for the government to demonstrate national responsibility and to implement climate justice.

### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the other petition is regarding multiple sclerosis, which affects 55,000 to 75,000 Canadians.

With the new treatment, chronic cerebral spinal venous insufficiency, one-third of patients significantly improve, one-third improve, and one-third show little to no improvement. The petitioners are asking that the Minister of Health actively engage people who are involved in CCSVI testing and treatment to have phase III clinical trials on an urgent basis in multiple centres across Canada and to have follow-up care for all patients who have the CCSVI procedure.

### FALUN GONG

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have hundreds of petitions here from Canadians across the country who condemn the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China and request the rescue of family members in China.

Falun Gong is a peaceful and beneficial spiritual practice centred on the principles of truth, compassion and forbearance, as well as a set of five meditation exercises. Since July 19, 1999, when the Chinese Communist Party launched an eradication campaign against Falun Gong, its policy was to destroy the reputation of its practitioners, bankrupt them financially and eliminate them completely. This has led to the arbitrary detention and torture of hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners for their beliefs. Twelve family members of Canadians are now serving jail terms of up to 12 years simply for their belief in Falun Gong.

The medical community, the UN community against torture and many other organizations have shown great concern that living Falun Gong practitioners have been slaughtered en masse for their vital organs for organ transplant tourism. The petitioners are urgently calling on our government to publicly condemn the Chinese Communist regime's illegal persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and to help rescue the family members of Canadians who are incarcerated in China simply for their belief in Falun Gong.

*Routine Proceedings*

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from constituents of mine asking the Canadian government to enact a Canada public transit strategy. They note that Canadians are looking for fast, reliable and affordable public transit. At this point, there is no permanent investment planned to support public transit. They are asking for a federal funding mechanism for public transit. They want the federal government to take a leadership role to work with all levels of government to provide sustainable, predictable, long-term and adequate funding. They also want to make sure that there are accountability measures in place so that the funding that is provided for public transit would be done in a transparent way. They note that Canada is the only OECD country that does not have a national public transit strategy.

It is estimated that over the next five years there will be an \$18 billion gap in transit infrastructure needs.

• (1515)

## MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that is signed by a number of people in Saskatchewan, mostly around the Saskatoon and Wadena areas. These Canadians are concerned about chronic cerebral spinal venous insufficiency. They are worried that patients are sometimes denied proper access to testing and treatment in Canada. They urge the Minister of Health to consult with experts who have actual experience in this particular field and to proceed with phase III clinical trials on an urgent basis with a large patient participation in multiple centres across Canada. They also urge the Minister of Health to require follow-up for the patients with the appropriate kind of examination to track their actual experience.

I am very pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

## CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition from the residents of Canada who draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Government of Canada funds the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to the sum of \$1.1 billion per annum and that the vast amounts of Government of Canada funding gives the CBC an unfair advantage over its private sector competitors.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to end public funding for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my petition is also about good governance, fairness and accountability.

The petitioners state that the Government of Canada funds the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to the sum of \$1.1 billion per annum and that the vast amount of Government of Canada funding gives the CBC an unfair advantage over its private sector competitor.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to end public funding of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, for my first petition tabled in the year 2012, I think this is an issue that will dominate 2012.

The petitioners want to note that the proposed Enbridge northern gateway pipeline would require overturning a 40-year moratorium respected by federal and provincial governments in this country since 1972; that a serious oil tanker ban to protect the coastline of British Columbia would require setting aside first nations' rights over much of the territory or, at the very minimum, ensuring consultation and support from first nations; and that the Environmental Assessment Act must be impartial and fair and the government should not suggest that it has already come to a conclusion before the evidence has been heard.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to cease support for a specific project, to obtain a neutral stance toward the hearing process and to allow a full, fair and impartial process under the National Energy Board, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and to fully respect first nations' rights.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 198, 203, 205, 208-210, 212, 215, 219, 221, 232, 233, 236, 240, 245-249, 251, 253-255, 258, 259, 265, 273-275, 282, 284, 285, 288, 291, 292, 297, 299, 303, 307, 308, 310, 315, 316, 318, 321-326, 330, 341, 343, 344, 350, 363, 364, 378-380, 382, 386, 401 and 406.

[Text]

Question No. 198—**Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to the National Arts Centre (NAC): (a) for each of the fiscal years from 2001-2002 to 2010-2011, how many complimentary tickets to NAC performances, including, but not limited to, NAC Orchestra, English theatre, French theatre, and dance performances have been given free of charge by the government to Members of Parliament, Senators, Ontario Members of Provincial Parliament, Quebec Members of the National Assembly, elected municipal officials, unelected officials, diplomats and public servants, broken down by category of recipient; and (b) what was the total value of these tickets in each of these fiscal years?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for each of the more than 1,200 performances presented annually on its stages, the National Arts Centre, NAC, sets aside a small number of tickets for marketing, promotions and charitable giveaways. These tickets, which are called excess inventory, are often reserved for invited guests of the performing artists and guests of the show's promoter, and for other marketing purpose, for example, radio contest giveaways, and for not-for-profit organizations to help them fundraise, as well as, on some occasions, to elected and unelected officials so they may attend NAC performances that showcase their regions or constituents.

In response to (a), the NAC does not have a system that tracks the number of, or who receives, excess inventory tickets, including giveaways, charitable fundraising, and guests of the artist, the promoter or the NAC.



*Routine Proceedings*

In response to (b), as per standard industry practice, set by industry leaders such as Ticketmaster, excess inventory tickets provide no revenue, because they would not have been sold, and therefore have no monetary value.

**Question No. 203—Mr. Peter Stoffer:**

With respect to the veterans health care services review undertaken by the government in 2005: (a) was the review cancelled and, if yes, why; (b) what were the total costs of the veterans health care services review; (c) was the health care services review completed; (d) if not, how close was the review to being completed; (e) what are the third party contractors who may have been contracted or sub-contracted to complete the veterans health care services review; (f) what are the draft recommendations from the health care services review; and (g) did Veterans Affairs Canada adopt any of these recommendations from the health care services review?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the veterans health care services review was not cancelled. It was completed in early 2008.

In response to (b), documentation regarding costs of the veterans health care services review was provided to the Minister of Veterans Affairs as advice.

In response to (c) and (d), the veterans health care services review was completed in early 2008.

In response to (e), Veterans Affairs Canada did not engage third party contractors. The department sought the advice and input of internal and external stakeholders and experts, such as the Gerontological Advisory Council and the Royal Canadian Legion.

In response to (f), recommendations, provided as advice to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, were developed as a result of the veterans health care services review.

In response to (g), yes, two significant changes were implemented to help veterans and their families as a result of the recommendations from the veterans health care services review.

Through budget 2008, the government expanded access to the housekeeping and grounds maintenance benefits under the veterans independence program to ensure that low-income or disabled survivors of the Second World War and the Korean War veterans, those who need these services the most, will have the help they need to remain independent in their homes.

In June 2009, the government introduced changes to the War Veterans Allowance Act to provide low-income allied veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War, and eligible survivors, with access to the war veterans allowance and associated assistance and health benefits. These changes were implemented in January 2010 and were a direct result of the veterans health care services review.

**Question No. 205—Ms. Libby Davies:**

With regard to the Canada Pension Plan: (a) how many claims have been made by individuals who have applied to designate a beneficiary of their survivor pensions from the Canada Pension Plan to someone who is not their spouse or common-law partner; and (b) how many of these claims have been turned down?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Canada pension plan does not have a provision for designating beneficiaries before a contributor dies. The legislation defines who is eligible to apply for a survivor benefit after the death of a contributor.

Consequently, the administration does not track and collect claims that we may receive from contributors seeking to designate as a beneficiary someone who is not their spouse or common-law partner.

**Question No. 208—Ms. Judy Foote:**

With respect to the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements announced by the Prime Minister on September 26, 2010, for Hurricane Igor victims in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL): (a) what was the exact financial commitment made to NL; (b) to date, how much money has been transferred to NL; (c) when will the government transfer the remaining funds owed; and (d) what criteria were used in judging applications for assistance as a result of Hurricane Igor?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), under the disaster financial assistance arrangements, DFAA, federal cost sharing will be provided for provincial response and recovery expenditures resulting from hurricane Igor. The total amount of federal cost sharing is determined according to the terms and conditions of the DFAA, and is calculated once all provincial documentation in support of a final payment has been submitted and the required federal audit process is complete.

In response to (b), to date, an advance payment of \$16 million was made to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in April 2011.

In response to (c), subsequent federal payments will be made after the province submits additional documentation of expenditures for review by a federal auditor. The timing of the request for subsequent payments is entirely up to the province.

In response to (d), eligibility of provincial expenditures for federal cost sharing is based on established DFAA criteria, which are applied consistently to natural disasters across Canada. All assistance to individuals, businesses and local governments is provided under the provincial assistance program criteria.

**Question No. 209—Ms. Judy Foote:**

With respect to the Marine Atlantic Canadian Forces Appreciation Fare: (a) is there a maximum number of military personnel or veterans that can travel on a particular crossing for free on the Port aux Basques-North Sydney ferry route and the Argentic-North Sydney ferry route, broken down by (i) walk-on passengers, (ii) vehicles; (b) what is the maximum number of military personnel or veterans that can travel on a particular crossing for free on the Port aux Basques-North Sydney ferry route and the Argentic-North Sydney ferry route, broken down by (i) walk-on passengers, (ii) vehicles; (c) has there ever been a maximum number of military personnel or veterans that can travel on a particular crossing for free on the Port aux Basques-North Sydney ferry route and the Argentic-North Sydney ferry route, broken down by (i) walk-on passengers, (ii) vehicles; (d) what is the process for when there is a paying customer and a military personnel or veteran who arrive at the same time for the last vehicle place on a vessel; and (e) will the Marine Atlantic Canadian Forces Appreciation Fare be continued in 2012-2013?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a)(i) and (ii) respectively, there is no limit on the amount of walk-on passengers, and, yes, there is a 10 vehicle limit. In response to (b)(i) and (ii) respectively, there is no limit on the amount of walk-on passengers, and there is a 10 vehicle limit.

In response to (c)(i), the answer is no, since there is no maximum for walk-on passengers.

In response to (c)(ii), during the summer of 2011, 31 out of 880 departures fully utilized the 10 vehicle limit for the military appreciation fare. This represents less than 5% of available crossings.

In response to (d), the majority of the corporation's customers, the personal related vehicle customers, book their passage in advance of their desired crossing either online or by phone. If there were only one space left on a vessel, the first person to book a reservation would receive that space. The chance of two customers showing up at two separate ticket booths to book a ticket for the same crossing, for which there happens be only one space left, is extraordinarily unlikely. It should be noted that during the 2011 summer season, customers could drive up to one of the corporation's terminals and book a ticket on the next crossing 99 per cent of the time.

In response to (e), Marine Atlantic's decision will be communicated to the public on the corporation's website in due course.

**Question No. 210—Ms. Judy Foote:**

With regard to Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre St. John's (MRSC St. John's), operated by the Canadian Coast Guard and Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre Québec (MRSC Québec) operated by the Canadian Coast Guard and the consolidated Joint Rescue Coordination Centres (JRCC) in Trenton, Ontario or Halifax, Nova Scotia: (a) what is the planned timeline for MRSC St. John's closure, including dates for (i) termination of operations, (ii) period designated for training, (iii) full operation of JRCC Maritime service, (iv) relocation of MRSC St. John's employees, (v) new hiring to replace MRSC St. John's employees refusing relocation; (b) what is the planned timeline for MRSC Québec closure, including dates for (i) termination of operations, (ii) period designated for training, (iii) full operation of JRCC Maritime service, (iv) relocation of MRSC Québec employees, (v) new hiring to replace MRSC Québec employees refusing relocation; (c) how many people were employed by the MRSC St. John's including part-time, full-time and contractual workers, on May 2, 2011; (d) how many of MRSC St. John's employees have accepted relocation to other government postings to date; (e) how many of MRSC St. John's employees are expected to relocate to the JRCC and of those employees who will relocate to the JRCC, how much relocation compensation will be offered per employee; (f) with respect to the employees of MRSC St. John's, what were the mandatory qualifications required for hire; (g) with respect to the new hires to replace the services of MRSC St. John's at JRCC, what will be the required qualifications; (h) how many people were employed by the MRSC Québec, including part-time, full-time and contractual workers, on May 2, 2011; (i) how many of MRSC Québec employees have accepted relocation to other government postings to date; (j) how many of MRSC Québec employees are expected to relocate to the JRCC, and, of those employees who will relocate to the JRCC, how much relocation compensation will be offered per employee; (k) with respect to the employees of MRSC Québec, what were the mandatory qualifications required for hire; (l) with respect to the new hires to replace the services of MRSC Québec at JRCC, what will be the required qualifications; (m) what research was executed in order to determine that no loss of service would occur with MRSC St. John's consolidation to the JRCC, and on what date did the relevant research commence; (n) on what date was the initial plan to close MRSC St. John's discussed within the relevant departments; (o) what research was executed in order to determine that no loss of service would occur with MRSC Québec consolidation to the JRCC, and on what date did the relevant research commence; (p) on what date was the initial plan to close MRSC Québec discussed within the relevant departments; and (q) what is the complete breakdown of the initial

investment for the cost to close the MRSC St. John's and the MRSC Québec, broken down by region, and how was this figure estimated in terms of (i) allocation for relocation for current employees, (ii) allocation for closure or appropriation of buildings, (iii) new hires, (iv) language training, (v) Maritime Search Planning Courses, (vi) Search and Rescue (SAR) Mission Co-ordinator Courses, (vii) SAR Mobile Facilities or On-Scene Co-ordinator Courses, (viii) other training, (ix) severance packages for current employees, (x) infrastructure renovation or expansion of JRCC Trenton, (xi) infrastructure renovation or expansion of JRCC Halifax, (xii) all other estimated costs associated with consolidation and closure, (xiii) estimated ongoing annual costs with operation of consolidated service?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a) and (b), full implementation will occur when the Canadian Coast Guard is comfortable that the present level of safety and service can be maintained.

In response to (c), on May 2, 2011, there were eleven maritime search and rescue, SAR, coordinators and one regional supervisor maritime SAR employed on a full-time basis at the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre, MRSC, St. John's. There were no part time or contract workers employed there at that time.

In response to (d) and (e), to date, none of the MRSC St. John's employees have accepted other government postings.

In response to (f) and (g), the essential qualifications to be hired as a coast guard SAR mission coordinator were posted to the Public Service Commission job postings site in August and September 2011.

In response to (h), on May 2, 2011, there were five maritime SAR coordinators and one regional supervisor maritime search and rescue employed on a full-time basis at MRSC Quebec. There were 2 contract or term workers employed as maritime SAR coordinators at that time.

In response to (i) and (j), as of December 13, 2011, one MRSC Québec employee has accepted a government posting. None have agreed to relocate to the joint rescue coordination centres, JRCCs.

In response to (k) and (l), the essential qualifications to be hired as a coast guard SAR mission coordinator were posted to the Public Service Commission job postings site in August and September 2011.

In response to (m)(n)(o) and (p), the MRSC consolidation is a strategic review proposal. In accordance with the rules for the development of these proposals, any information relating to their development and implementation is considered cabinet confidential.

In response to (q), a net annual and ongoing cost savings of \$1,000,000 in salaries will be realized through the net reduction of fifteen full-time positions. Annual total overhead costs for telecommunications and informatics services and training, travelling and exercising will not change, and will be transferred from the MRSCs to the JRCCs. The total ongoing cost of consolidated JRCCs is not yet finalized.

One-time costs to implement the consolidation are dependent upon various factors, including the specific training and relocation requirements of each new hire and the scope of required upgrades to JRCC Halifax and JRCC Trenton. Renovation/upgrade costs for the JRCCs are under review, as there were several pre-existing renewal/upgrade projects under way at both JRCCs before the government announcement of this consolidation, that is, phone system upgrades, software/hardware upgrades and renovations.

Costs for any potential benefits paid to employees who choose to leave the public service are determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the union collective agreement. Should employees accept other employment within the public service, these costs will be avoided.

Question No. 212—**Ms. Joyce Murray:**

With respect to executive recruiting firm Odgers Berndtson and the recent selection process for a new Auditor General: (a) who was responsible for selecting the recruiting firm; (b) was there a competition for the contract awarded to the firm and, if yes, what was the nature of the competition; (c) if there was no competition, who suggested or recommended Odgers Berndtson; and (d) what was the total cost incurred by the government in employing Odgers Berndtson to manage the Auditor General selection process?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the selection processes for Governor in Council appointments, including agents of Parliament, comprise three main elements. The first is the establishment of selection criteria to reflect the key elements for a candidate to be considered qualified for the position sought.

The second is the development of a recruitment strategy, which outlines how candidates for the position will be sought. This can range from posting the position on the Governor-in-Council appointments website and publishing it in the Canada Gazette to a more elaborate strategy, which may include engaging an executive search firm, a national advertising strategy, a targeted outreach, for example, to professional groups and stakeholders.

The third is the assessment of candidates' qualifications. Normally this would involve interviews with a short list of candidates and reference checks.

In the case of the selection process for the new Auditor General, the Office of the Auditor General, in consultation with the Privy Council, was responsible for identifying and selecting a search firm that would support the selection committee in its efforts.

The national master standing offer for executive search services established by Public Works and Government Services Canada, PWGSC, through a competitive process was used to obtain the services of Odgers Berndtson.

The costs incurred by the Office of the Auditor General are disclosed on the Office of the Auditor General's public disclosure website.

Question No. 215—**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:**

With regard to the 2011 official visit by the Right Honourable David Cameron, Prime Minister of Great Britain, which African ambassadors and high commissioners were invited to attend the joint session of the Senate and the House of Commons of Canada to listen to the speech given by the aforementioned Prime Minister?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the heads of mission accredited to Canada from the following African countries were invited to attend the joint session of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada to listen to the speech given by the Right Honourable David Cameron:

Arab Republic of Egypt	Republic of Burundi	Republic of Namibia
Benin	Republic of Cameroon	Republic of Senegal
Burkina-Faso	Republic of Cape Verde	Republic of Seychelles
Central African Republic	Republic of Chad	Republic of Sierra Leone
Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Príncipe	Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	Republic of South Africa
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Republic of Cyprus	Republic of the Congo
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Republic of Djibouti	Republic of the Gambia
Federal Republic of Nigeria	Republic of Equatorial Guinea	Republic of the Niger
Gabonese Republic	Republic of Ghana	Republic of Tunisia
Islamic Republic of Mauritania	Republic of Guinea	Republic of Uganda
Kingdom of Lesotho	Republic of Guinea-Bissau	Republic of Zambia
Kingdom of Morocco	Republic of Kenya	Reunion
Kingdom of Swaziland	Republic of Liberia	Rwandese Republic
Libya	Republic of Malawi	State of Eritrea
People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	Republic of Mali	Togolese Republic
Republic of Angola	Republic of Mauritius	United Republic of Tanzania
Republic of Botswana	Republic of Mozambique	

Question No. 219—**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine:**

With regard to fixed-wing observational aircraft owned by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), since January 1, 2006: (a) how many aircraft are owned by the RCMP, broken down by the make, model, and age of the aircraft; (b) what are the dates of flights that these aircraft have taken; (c) what is the nature of the observational work these aircraft do; (d) what is the cost of this program, broken down by year; (e) what is the policy the RCMP applies with respect to the use of aircraft for the observation of civilian activity; (f) what is the RCMP policy on the use of aircraft for cellular surveillance; (g) what is the RCMP policy on the use of aircraft for the disruption of cellular signals; and (h) have these aircraft been lent to provinces to assist provincial police forces, and, if so, for each flight, what was or were (i) the flight date, (ii) the province using the aircraft, (iii) the cities in which the aircraft was used, (iv) the cost of each flight, (v) the nature of the flight and observation, (vi) all provincial agreements regarding this?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP owns 12 fixed-wing aircraft of various makes and models, ranging from 3 to 26 years of age, for surveillance. Aircraft are deployed for use across the country, as and when required. Requests from outside police forces may be considered based on operational availability.

For security reasons and to maintain the integrity of police operations, the RCMP cannot further identify these resources or release additional details as to their usage without jeopardizing ongoing police operations and investigational techniques, as well as the safety of RCMP personnel and the public.

Question No. 221—**Mr. Don Davies:**

With respect to immigration cases conducted through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP): (a) other than security and medical approval, does the federal government exercise control over any of the criteria applied in the selection of individuals for approval under the program, and, if it does, what are these criteria, what government department enforces these criteria, and where are officials responsible for enforcement located; (b) in the case of a disagreement between a province and a consulate, where does the ultimate authority lie with regard to approval; and (c) once approved by a province, can an application be denied by any federal government body, and, if yes, on what grounds?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), roles and responsibilities for the provincial nominee program, PNP, are defined through bilateral agreements between the Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CIC, and provincial and territorial, PT, governments. All of the provinces and territories except Quebec and Nunavut have signed nominee agreements with the federal government. The legislation and agreements confirm provincial/territorial authority to assess and nominate candidates who will be of economic benefit to the province or territory and who have a strong likelihood of becoming economically established in Canada, and are not nominated on the basis of a passive investment scheme entered into for the primary purpose of facilitating immigration to Canada.

Each jurisdiction is responsible for the design and management of its respective program, including the development of its own nomination criteria. Consultation with CIC is stipulated in each agreement. PTs are responsible for due diligence in respect of their nomination decisions and for document verification.

In response to (b), the legislation requires that the federal visa officer determines whether the applicant nominated by the province or territory meets the requirements of the provincial nominee class, that is, the ability to economically establish, the intent to reside, and not to be engaged in passive investment. An application will be refused if it is determined that the nomination of the applicant by a province or territory was based on a passive investment scheme entered into for the primary purpose of facilitating immigration to Canada.

In addition, it is clearly stipulated that final authority for the selection of applicants and the issuance of visas rests with the federal government. If the visa officer is not satisfied that the nomination certificate is a sufficient indicator that a foreign national can economically establish themselves in Canada, an officer may substitute his or her evaluation of the likelihood of the foreign national becoming economically established in Canada for the

nominating certificate. Such a substitution requires that the officer consult with the government that issued the certificate and also requires the concurrence of a second officer at the manager level.

In response to (c), CIC must consult with PTs if a nominee is likely to be refused on the basis of their inability to demonstrate they can economically establish. However, if the individual is likely to be refused because they do not meet the admissibility requirements under IRPA, that is, in regard to security, criminality, and health, et cetera, a refusal will be made without notifying the province before the final decision. Canada will forward a copy of the refusal letter to the province.

A permanent resident visa holder in the provincial nominee, PN, class seeking permanent resident status at a port of entry, POE, must establish that they still intend to reside in the province/territory that has nominated them. Individuals who indicate that they never intended, or no longer intend, to reside in the nominating province/territory may be denied permanent resident status at the POE because they have been deemed inadmissible due to non-compliance with the criteria associated with being a member of the PN class, or for misrepresentation.

The refusal rate for the PNP is fairly low. Between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011 the approval rate for applications from provincial nominees was 97%. This is because provinces and territories do an initial assessment of PNs against their program criteria. The Government of Canada is committed to working with provinces and territories to make the provincial nominee program a success. We have ongoing discussions with provinces and territories on how to improve the program design, integrity, selection standards and management of the provincial nominee programs.

Question No. 232—**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:**

With regard to the Federal Review Panel appointed by the Federal Minister of the Environment in 2009, in accordance with the requirements of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, to conduct a review of the environmental effects of Taseko Mines Limited's proposed Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine Project in the Cariboo-Chilcotin Regional District of British Columbia: (a) what was the total cost of the assessment of the original Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine project, the findings of which were published by the Federal Review Panel on July 2, 2010; and (b) what is the estimated cost of the assessment to be conducted on the new Prosperity Mine, which was announced by the Minister of the Environment on November 7, 2011?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the total cost incurred by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency for the federal review panel process for the prosperity gold-copper mine project was \$2.2 million.

Of that total, \$1.6 million is cost recoverable from the proponent, Taseko Mines Ltd., as per the Environmental Assessment Review Panel service charges order. The remaining \$0.6 million includes the costs of panel legal support and aboriginal consultations, which are not covered by the order.

*Routine Proceedings*

The \$2.2 million does not include costs incurred by the proponent, other federal departments and other participants in the review panel process.

In response to (b), key process decisions that will determine the cost of the panel review of the new prosperity proposal have not yet been made, including setting the environmental impact statement guidelines and the terms of reference for the panel. I have directed the agency to ensure that information obtained during the previous environmental assessment be used to the extent possible in order to ensure a timely decision. This should have the effect of reducing the costs for all parties.

Question No. 233—**Mr. Philip Toone:**

With regard to the government's involvement in private, medically-supervised detoxification treatment for First Nations, Inuit and Métis for each of the last ten years: (a) how many patients were referred to private services, by province and year, for treatment related to (i) solvents and inhalants, (ii) illegal drugs, (iii) prescription drugs, (iv) alcohol, (v) other; (b) what was the total cost for these services by (i) year, (ii) province; (c) what government departments and agencies have funded these services, and what was the cost for each such department and agency by (i) year, (ii) province; and (d) what government departments and agencies have referred clients or patients to these services by (i) year, (ii) province?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, Health Canada recognizes that alcohol, drug and solvent abuse remains a problem in some first nations and Inuit communities. Through the national native alcohol and drug abuse program, NNADAP, and the national youth solvent abuse program, NYSAP, Health Canada funds a national network of 58 addiction treatment centres in first nations communities. These services are available to both first nations and Inuit, and are distributed in communities across Canada in order to maximize accessibility. There are also over 550 community-based programs aimed at preventing alcohol and drug abuse problems from occurring, or recurring after someone has finished treatment.

As part of the national anti-drug strategy, Health Canada is investing \$30.5 million over five years, 2008-13, with \$9.1 million in ongoing funding, to improve access to quality addictions services for first nations and Inuit. A key investment under the national anti-drug strategy was a comprehensive needs-based review of on-reserve prevention and treatment services, carried out in partnership with first nations, which resulted in the development of a renewed framework for first nations addictions services.

The Government of Canada does not fund or track referrals to privately funded medical detoxification services for first nations, Inuit and Métis. Medically-based detoxification for addiction issues is the responsibility of provincial and territorial health services.

Question No. 236—**Ms. Joyce Murray:**

With regard to injuries and fatalities attributed to firearms in British Columbia: (a) for each year from 2001 to 2010 (inclusive), what are the number of injuries and what are the number of fatalities attributed to firearms in British Columbia in each category of non-restricted, restricted, and prohibited firearms and any firearm prescribed under the Criminal Code and associated regulations (including long guns); and (b) what number of the injuries and fatalities in (a) involved (i) suicides, (ii) accidents, (iii) incidents involving domestic violence, (iv) incidents involving women as victims, (v) incidents involving Aboriginal Canadians as victims?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP's informatics systems, the Canadian firearms

information system and the operational records management system, do not collect statistical data on injuries and fatalities related to firearms. They also do not have statistical information on injuries and fatalities where firearms were used in suicides, accidents, domestic violence situations or incidents where the victims were women or aboriginal Canadians.

The statistical data related to firearms that is collected is limited to the type of firearms offences committed.

Question No. 240—**Mr. Marc Garneau:**

With regard to the issuance of visas for foreign students studying in Canada: (a) does the student's country of origin affect what type of visa can be issued (that is, a single-entry or a multiple-entry visa); (b) what are the countries of origin of students who are eligible for single-entry visas but not multiple-entry visas; and (c) what are the countries of origin of students who are eligible for both types of visa?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, clients indicate on their application form if they are seeking a single-entry or multiple-entry visa. A client's country of origin does not affect what type of visa he or she is eligible to apply for or receive.

Question No. 245—**Hon. Irwin Cotler:**

With regard to the case of Sergei Magnitsky: (a) is the government preparing a list containing the names of any individual that it has reasonable grounds to believe (i) is responsible for the detention, abuse or death of Sergei Magnitsky, (ii) has conspired to defraud the Russian Federation of taxes on corporate profits through fraudulent transactions and lawsuits against the foreign investment company known as Hermitage and to misappropriate property owned or controlled by Hermitage, (iii) has participated in efforts to conceal the legal responsibility of those individuals involved in the detention, abuse or death of Sergei Magnitsky or the existence of the conspiracy referred to in point (ii); (b) if the government is preparing a list as per (a), does the list include the names of the 60 senior Russian officials included by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe on its list entitled "Individuals involved in the tax fraud against Hermitage and the torture and death of Sergei Magnitsky"; (c) does the government plan to declare as ineligible for visas any foreign national whose name appears on the list referred to in (a), as well as the members of the foreign national's immediate family; and (d) does the government plan to revoke the permanent or temporary resident status of any foreign national whose name appears on the list referred to in (a)?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a)(i), (a)(ii), (a)(iii) and (b), the promotion and the protection of human rights is an integral part of Canadian foreign policy, and the government will continue to take principled positions on important issues to ensure that freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, values that define this country, are enjoyed around the world. The Government of Canada follows the human rights situation in Russia closely, and the promotion of Canadian values features prominently in our ongoing dialogue with the Russian authorities.

*Routine Proceedings*

On October 28, 2011, the member for Mount Royal introduced Bill C-339, the Condemnation of Russian Corruption Act, which would require the government to take the same actions outlined in Q-245. DFAIT is still in the process of carefully reviewing the legislation, as is standard when these items are brought forward for introduction and debate.

With regard to (c) and (d), matters pertaining to visas and permanent or temporary residencies fall outside the purview of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

**Question No. 246—Mr. Brent Rathgeber:**

With regard to the Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC) and its employment of Peter Mansbridge, George Strombolopolous, and Hubert T. Lacroix: (a) what do the CBC's employment agreements with each of these individuals provide each individual in terms of (i) salary, (ii) vehicle allowance or provision of car and/or driver, (iii) expense account for food, drink, alcohol and hospitality, (iv) out-of-town accommodations for the individual; (b) in each of the years between 2000 and 2011, how much did each of these individuals expense to the CBC for (i) food, (ii) travel, (iii) hotels, (iv) hospitality, (v) drink, (vi) vehicle use; (c) what were the itemized amounts and descriptions of each individual's individual expenses as identified in the answers to (b); and (d) if the CBC provides any of these individuals with a vehicle for his use, as identified in the answers to (a)(ii), broken down by individual, (i) what is the model and make of the car, (ii) how much does this benefit cost the CBC on an annual basis?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, individuals employed by CBC/Radio-Canada are not government employees. As specified in subsection 44(2) of the Broadcasting Act, officers and employees employed by CBC/Radio-Canada are employed "on such terms and conditions and at such rates of remuneration as the Board deems fit".

With regard to (a), (b) and (c), the employment agreements between CBC/Radio-Canada and chief correspondent and program host Peter Mansbridge, CBC/Radio-Canada and program host George Stroubouloupoulos are both competitive and programming information. The majority of expenses of Peter Mansbridge and George Stroubouloupoulos are incurred as part of their programming activities on behalf of CBC/Radio-Canada and are not public. It is not possible to separate programming from administrative expenses in the time provided for responding to this question. Their salary information is also protected in accordance with the federal Privacy Act.

The president of CBC/Radio-Canada is paid by the corporation remuneration at the rate fixed by the Governor in Council in accordance with subsection 43(1) in part III of the Broadcasting Act. Hubert T. Lacroix earns a salary in the CEO 7 range, which for 2011 was \$358,400 to \$421,600, as specified by the government at these websites: <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=secretariats&sub=spsp-psps&doc=sal/sal2011-eng.htm> and <http://www.appointments.gc.ca/prfOrg.asp?OrgID=CBC&type-ty-p=3&lang=eng>.

The president was appointed by Order in Council P.C. 2007-1658 of October 31, 2007, which is available on the government's website of <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/oic-ddc.asp?lang=eng&Page=secretariats&txtOICID=2007-1658&txtFromDate=&txtToDate=&txtPrecis=&txtDepartment=&txtAct=&txtChapterNo=&txtChapterYear=&txtBillNo=&rdoComingIntoForce=&DoSearch=Search+%2F+List&viewattach=17438&blnDisplayFlg=1>

With regard to (d), CBC/Radio-Canada does not provide Peter Mansbridge or George Stroubouloupoulos with a vehicle.

The president and CEO is provided with a vehicle and driver. In 2010, the vehicle was a 2007 Ford Five Hundred. In 2010 the vehicle was replaced with a 2011 Ford Taurus. The cost of the vehicle is approximately \$10,900 per year. The salary range for the transportation assistant is \$34,000- \$56,500.

The expenses of the president and CEO are approved by the chair of CBC/Radio-Canada. They are also reviewed on a quarterly basis by CBC/Radio-Canada's internal auditors. These expenses, dating back to 2007 when the president joined the corporation, are published each quarter on CBC/Radio-Canada's public disclosure website at [http://www.cbc.radio-canada.ca/docs/expenses/expenses\\_choice2.shtml](http://www.cbc.radio-canada.ca/docs/expenses/expenses_choice2.shtml).

The annual totals for the President's claimed expenses since his appointment are as follows: 2007, \$3,114.93; 2008, \$59,324.70; 2009, \$41,194.28; 2010, \$48,913.23; and 2011, \$29,810.51.

The corporation does not itemize expenses in the manner requested. The president's claimed expenses, including copies of receipts, which have already been released through the access to information office, are publicly available on CBC/Radio-Canada's websites: <http://www.cbc.radio-canada.ca/docs/disclosure/pdf/A201100082.PDF>, [http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/PDF\\_files/expenses/2009/A200900221\\_2010-10-12\\_14-14-34.PDF](http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/PDF_files/expenses/2009/A200900221_2010-10-12_14-14-34.PDF), and [http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/PDF\\_files/expenses/2008/A200800217\\_2010-10-19\\_10-15-01.PDF](http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/PDF_files/expenses/2008/A200800217_2010-10-19_10-15-01.PDF).

**Question No. 247—Mr. Brent Rathgeber:**

With respect to contracts and costs associated with the development or acquisition of programming at or by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC): (a) how much does CBC pay Rick Mercer or any company of which he is the proprietor; (b) did the CBC hold an open tender for a political satire show for the Mercer Report or was the contract untendered; (c) how much did the CBC spend on the rights for (i) Wheel of Fortune, (ii) Jeopardy, (iii) American movies; (d) what contracts has the CBC signed with Zaibe Shaikh or Governor Films in the last five years, if any, (i) for how much money (individually and in total), (ii) what was provided in return, (iii) which of these contracts were put out for open competition and which were not; and (e) how many untendered contracts has the CBC signed in the last five years, and, if it has signed any such contract, (i) with whom, (ii) for how much money (individually and in total), (iii) what did the CBC get for each of these contracts?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), contracts and costs associated with the development or acquisition of programming at or by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation are programming information and of a competitive nature as referred to in part III, subsection 35(2) of the Broadcasting Act.

With regard to (b), broadcasters do not "tender" contracts for the development or acquisition of programming.

Over the past five years the corporation has concluded hundreds of contracts with independent producers for program pre-development, development, pilot production, and acquisition. CBC/Radio-Canada is always looking for smart, diverse, popular and relevant Canadian programming and provides two websites for independent producers to pitch programming ideas to the corporation: <http://www.cbc.ca/independentproducers/> and <http://projets.radio-canada.ca/>.

*Routine Proceedings*

Decisions to develop a specific program or not depend on a number of factors, including the corporation's broadcast conditions of licence, the region where the program would be produced, the potential appeal of the program, the cost of the program, whether it is eligible for funding support from the Canada Media Fund, and how the proposed program would fit into the network's planned program schedule for its designated season.

CBC/Radio-Canada is authorized to "make contracts with any person, within or outside Canada, in connection with the production or presentation of programs originated or secured by the Corporation" and "make contracts with any person, within or outside Canada, for performances in connection with the programs of the Corporation", as stated in paragraphs 46(1)(d) and 46(1)(e) of part III of the Broadcasting Act.

Question No. 248—**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:**

With respect to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) bureaus, what is the itemized list of expenses for hospitality, food, drink, hotels and transportation for the CBC bureaus in (i) Paris, (ii) London, (iii) Washington, (iv) Rome?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CBC/Radio-Canada operates 13 foreign news bureaus, including bureaus in Paris, London and Washington. The corporation does not have a bureau in Rome.

The bureaus are used as a base of operations for coverage of events in surrounding regions and countries as required and approved by the head of news and current affairs. Expenses incurred by these bureaus include travel to remote locations, hotels, accreditation and travel documentation. These expenses are part of the corporation's journalistic programming activities and are not public. Expenses are not automatically separated into programming and non-programming categories; this would require a manual review of every expense. It is not possible to separate the programming from administrative expenses of these bureaus in the time provided for responding to this question. News budgets are approved by the vice-presidents of CBC and Radio-Canada.

Question No. 249—**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:**

With respect to salaries at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), how many employees at the CBC earn more than \$100,000.00, and what are their names and salaries?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CBC/Radio-Canada currently has approximately 730 employees who earn more than \$100,000 per year. Their names and precise salaries are protected as per the federal Privacy Act and Access to Information Act.

Question No. 251—**Ms. Éline Michaud:**

With regard to the wharf at Portneuf, Quebec, administered by Transport Canada: (a) does the department wish to maintain ownership of the wharf or does it intend to dispose of it; (b) in the event that Transport Canada wishes to keep the Portneuf wharf, (i) will the headblock be rebuilt, (ii) will environmental liability issues, particularly the water contamination from the structure, be corrected, (iii) is there a maintenance plan in place to maintain the wharf, (iv) what kind of operations does Transport Canada wish to conduct, (v) what is Transport Canada's policy on working with the Municipality of Portneuf to develop its plans to operate the wharf; and (c) in the event that Transport Canada wishes to dispose of it, (i) does Transport Canada wish to transfer ownership to a private contractor, a provincial government, or a municipal or paramunicipal agency, (ii) what financial incentives will the government offer to the transferee, (iii) will the headblock be rebuilt, (iv) will environmental liability issues be corrected?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a) Transport Canada wishes to dispose of the Portneuf wharf.

b) Not applicable; see a).

c) Information on the port divestiture program is available on the following website: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/mediaroom/backgrounders-b06-m001e-1837.htm>.

Question No. 253—**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:**

With regard to contracts and costs associated with the Prime Minister's office (PMO) and ministerial exempt staff: (a) how much is paid to Nigel Wright or any company of which he was a proprietor or partner; (b) did the PMO hold an open tender for Dimitri Soudas' job or was the contract untendered; (c) how much did the PMO spend on (i) Canada's Economic Action Plan, (ii) the G8 and G20 summits, (iii) Canadian television productions; (d) what contracts has the PMO signed with Ezra Levant or any registered lobbyist, government relations or public opinion firm in the last five years, if any, (i) for how much money (individually and in total), (ii) what was provided in return, (iii) which of these contracts were put out for open competition and which were not; and (e) how many untendered contracts have been signed in the last five years, and, if the PMO or Minister's office has signed any such contract, (i) with whom, (ii) for how much money (individually and in total), (iii) what was obtained for each of these contracts?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, an individual's exact salary constitutes the personal information of that individual and is withheld in accordance with the principles of the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act.

With regard to (b), (d) and (e), as stated at 7.1 of the Treasury Board "Policies for Ministers' Offices", "...ministerial offices are subject to the Financial Administration Act, its regulations, and Treasury Board policies." Only procurement officers within the Privy Council Office hold contracting authority under subsection 32 (1) of the Financial Administration Act. The Prime Minister's Office, PMO, does not hold the authority to contract directly for goods and services.

With regard to (c), the Prime Minister's Office, PMO, does not fund government programs. The PMO did not provide funds for the Canada economic action plan, the G8 and G20 summits, or Canadian television productions. However, some financial expenditures related to the Canada economic action plan and the G8 and G20 summits can be seen in proactive disclosure on the Privy Council Office website at the following link: [www.pco-bcp.gc.ca](http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca).

Question No. 254—**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:**

With respect to the Prime Minister's Office, ministerial exempt staff and Ministers, what is the itemized list of expenses for hospitality, food, drink, hotels and transportation in (i) Paris, (ii) London, (iii) Washington, (iv) Rome, (v) Boston?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the information requested is made available through proactive disclosure, which can be found on individual departmental websites and is updated quarterly.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 255—Mr. Tyrone Benskin:**

With respect to salaries at the Prime Minister's Office and Ministers' offices, how many employees earn more than \$100,000.00, and what are their names and salaries?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act, the names and exact salaries of personnel cannot be released.

Salary maximums for exempt staff are equivalent to those of certain positions in the public service. The salary ranges for ministers' offices are outlined in section 3.3 of the "Policies for Ministers' Offices", which can be found at [http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs\\_pol/hrpubs/mg-ldm/2011/pgmo-pldcm03-eng.asp#toc3-3](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/mg-ldm/2011/pgmo-pldcm03-eng.asp#toc3-3). The equivalent salary ranges for the public service can be found at <http://publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/gui/prtt-eng.asp> and [http://publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs\\_pol/hrpubs/coll\\_agre/rates-taux-eng.asp](http://publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/coll_agre/rates-taux-eng.asp).

Ministers' office expenditures are reported annually in the Public Accounts of Canada. For the latest ministers' office expenditures, members may refer to the Public Accounts, volume III, section 10.28, at [www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/txt/72-eng.html](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/txt/72-eng.html).

**Question No. 258—Hon. Geoff Regan:**

With respect to radio masts, antennas, and towers (henceforth each referred to simply as the "tower") licensed or otherwise permitted to operate by Industry Canada: (a) what is the total number of such towers across the country; (b) what is the municipal street address, as well as latitude and longitude for each tower, and, for each tower, (i) who owns and operates the tower and for what purpose, (ii) at what radio frequencies and at what wattage are the transmitters on each tower operating, (iii) at what height above ground level is the tower, (iv) at what height above sea level is the tower, (v) what is the year of construction of the tower, (vi) when was the last structural inspection of the tower, (vii) does the tower conform to Health Canada guidelines, (viii) have there been any incidents reported relating to the tower, (ix) have there been any complaints lodged relating to the tower and what was the outcome or status of any associated investigation; and (c) how many towers remain standing that are no longer in use or operation, and, for each such tower, (i) who owns the tower, (ii) what purpose did the tower serve before being retired, (iii) at what height above ground level is the tower, (iv) at what height above sea level is the tower, (v) what is the year of construction of the tower, (vi) when was the last structural inspection of the tower, (vii) why was the tower retired, (viii) have there been any incidents reported relating to the tower, (ix) have there been any complaints lodged relating to the tower and what was the outcome or status of any associated investigation, (x) what plans exist to remove or restore the tower?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), (b)(i), (b)(ii), (b)(iii), (b)(iv), (b)(v) and (c)(v), radio communication would not work without antennas, which, to function effectively, are often supported by towers or other tall structures such as buildings. The Canadian public, businesses, police, firefighters, ambulances, air navigation systems and national defence use antenna systems, including towers, to ensure reliable radio communication. Industry Canada's interests relate primarily to managing the radio frequency spectrum, a limited resource. For this reason, no differentiation is made as to whether an antenna is, for example, located on a tower, on top of a building or is using some other structure such as a water tower. Accordingly, our database only records the location of radio stations in use.

Currently there are approximately 250,000 radio licences issued by Industry Canada. Available technical databases include current radio frequency assignments, including geographical coordinates; the name of the authorization holder, but not the use of the

radiofrequency; radio frequency and wattage; the site elevation above sea level and the height of the antenna above ground level, but not the year of construction. These databases are available at <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/sd-sd.nsf/eng/Home> for all non-broadcasting towers, including cellular, but they do not include public safety and national security agencies.

Broadcasting tower databases are available at [http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/sp\\_dgsc-ps\\_dggs.nsf/eng/gg00026.html](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/sp_dgsc-ps_dggs.nsf/eng/gg00026.html).

With regard to (b)(vi), Industry Canada does not inspect towers for structural adequacy. This is the tower owner's responsibility.

With regard to (b)(vii), (b)(viii) and (b)(ix), exposure levels emitted by towers vary. However, Industry Canada requires that, at all times, all towers must comply with Health Canada's Safety Code 6 guideline for the protection of the general public from radio frequency exposure. Industry Canada requires the immediate submission of compliance information when it is concerned that a site may not be in compliance with Safety Code 6 for the purpose of protecting the general public. Alternatively, Industry Canada requires that the operator cease operation at the site in question pending Industry Canada's receipt of information and departmental concurrence that Safety Code 6 is being respected. The vast majority of radio installations comply with the exposure limits by a very wide margin. Industry Canada has confirmed this by conducting directed radio frequency field measurements. Industry Canada does not keep a database of the number of complaints lodged relating to towers.

With regard to (c)(i), (c)(ii), (c)(iii), (c)(iv) and (c)(vi) through (c)(x), Industry Canada has no authority over towers that are no longer in use or operation for the purpose of radio communication. Such structures would fall under provincial and territorial authority.

**Question No. 259—Hon. John McKay:**

With respect to the Treasury Board of Canada's mandated cuts to each department, specifically the Department of National Defence: (a) what is the total number of dollars that the Department of National Defence will be cutting from its expenditures, by service (Navy, Air, Army), (i) how many staff will be cut and out of which group of employees (e.g., consultants, officers, reserves, etc.), and by service (Navy, Air, Army), (ii) how many military assets will be cut (e.g., armed forces vehicles), either in current operation or previously slated for procurement, as well as support equipment and personnel (e.g., for repairs and maintenance); (b) has the department conducted a study on how these cuts will affect the operational capacity of the armed forces, broken down by Navy, Air, Army, and its impact with respect to training capacity for all of the above services, and, if so, what were the conclusions; (c) what will the effect of the cuts be on the department's provision of health services to military personnel; and (d) has the government adjusted its schedule for fulfillment of or financial commitment to the Canada First defence policy?



*Routine Proceedings***Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence has undertaken a full review of its spending to ensure that all expenditures and programs were aligned to departmental and government priorities. This thorough review was followed by an analysis to ensure that programs and spending were effective and efficient, focused on core roles, and met the needs of Canadians. Programs were assessed with regard to their intended results, as defined in the program activity architecture, and in relation to their role within the delivery of the Canada First defence strategy. The results of this review continue to be assessed.

**Question No. 265—Hon. John McKay:**

With respect to the opening of the Office of the Extractive Sector Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Counsellor: (a) how many requests for review have been submitted to the Office of the Extractive Sector CSR Counsellor; (b) of the requests for review that have been submitted as per (a), (i) how many have progressed to informal mediation, (ii) what is the overall cost for each individual review, (iii) what are each of the individual expenses associated with each review process, (iv) how many meetings were conducted related to each review process, who was present in each of the meetings, and who did each of those present at the meetings represent, (v) has the Extractive Sector CSR Counsellor provided interim reports regarding each of her request for reviews, and, if not, why has no report been provided, (vi) when can an interim report be expected for each review, (vii) what was the outcome of each of the review processes engaged in by the Extractive Sector CSR counsellor, (viii) if any review was closed without progressing to formal mediation and without resolution, what were the reasons for closing the case; and (c) has the Extractive Sector CSR Counsellor received any requests for review that she has declined to allow to progress to informal mediation, and, if yes, for what reasons was the request for review declined?

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), there have been two requests for review submitted to the Office of the Extractive Sector CSR Counsellor, "the Office". One review pertained to Excellon Resources Inc. in Mexico, while the other pertains to First Quantum Minerals Ltd. in Mauritania.

With regard to (b)(i), both reviews progressed to informal mediation.

With regard to (b)(ii), each review requires administrative expenditures, such as those on telephone, courier, and office supplies, and uses a portion of the Office's fixed costs, such as salaries and benefits, but outside of these costs, the most significant expenditures by the Office in both instances have been on external services related to travel and translation. For the Mexico-related review, the overall external costs to the Office totalled \$22,438.72. The overall external costs to the Office for the Mauritania case total \$435.50 thus far.

With regard to (b)(iii), costs for the review of the Mexico case include travel, visa fees, accommodation, local transportation, per diems, and interpretation costs for two field visits to Mexico by the counsellor and the senior advisor. The first field visit to Mexico City in May 2011 cost a total of \$4,463.83 and the second field visit to the La Platosa mine site and surrounding community in July 2011 cost \$7,416.99 in total. Total charges for translation into French and Spanish of the two field visits reports and the October 2011 closing report were \$10,557.90. There have been no travel costs associated with the review in Mauritania to date. Communications with the requester have resulted in translation charges of \$435.50.

With regard to (b)(iv), with respect to the case in Mexico, well over 100 conversations and meetings were held between April and October 2011, both by teleconference and in person. The majority of meetings held were either with some or all of the requesters at various times during the process or with various representatives of Excellon Resources Inc., either in an individual or group context. Other meetings were held with Canadian Embassy officials in Mexico City; Canadian and Mexican legal representatives of Excellon Resources; Mexican national, regional, and local government officials; third party experts; community members at site; ejido leaders in the community; mine employees at site; mine management at site; and other stakeholders with expertise in the issues.

In the Mauritania review, meetings by teleconference have occurred on numerous occasions with the requester and the responding party.

With regard to (b)(v), the Extractive Sector CSR Counsellor produced two interim reports and one final report on the review of the Mexico case. All three reports are available on the Office's website at [www.international.gc.ca/csr\\_counsellor-conseiller\\_rse](http://www.international.gc.ca/csr_counsellor-conseiller_rse). No reports have yet been produced for the case in Mauritania, as the Counsellor has determined that it is premature to do so at this time.

With regard to (b)(vi), the Order in Council that created the Office of the Extractive Sector CSR Counsellor, P.C. 2009-0422 of March 25, 2009, requires the Counsellor to produce a final report on each request for review as well as an annual report to Parliament. Interim reports are important and are produced in order to meet the Office's public commitments to its key guiding principles, which are to be transparent, accessible, responsive, predictable, independent and effective. The Counsellor has produced an interim report at the conclusion of each field visit.

With regard to (b)(vii), the review process of the case in Mexico was closed in October 2011 following the decision by the responding party to withdraw from the process. The ongoing case in Mauritania is currently at step 4 of the Counsellor's review process.

With regard to (b)(viii), the Office's review process has five stages, including an optional avenue at the fifth and final stage for parties to engage in formal mediation outside of the Office's process. The review of the case in Mexico closed at the fourth stage of the Office's process following the decision by the responding party to withdraw.

With regard to (c), the Extractive Sector CSR Counsellor has not received any requests for review that she has declined to allow to progress to informal mediation.

**Question No. 273—Hon. Judy Sgro:**

With regard to Bill C-25, An Act relating to pooled registered pension plans and making related amendments to other Acts (PRPP Act): (a) has the government secured the necessary provincial consent required to enact the appropriate companion legislation; (b) how will the government ensure that fees payable by plan members remain low, as required by the PRPP Act; and (c) how will the government define and control the fees charged in accordance with the PRPP Act?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), at the December 2010 finance ministers' meeting, all finance ministers agreed on a framework for pooled registered pension plans, PRPPs. Bill C-25 provides a legal framework for the establishment and administration of PRPPs for those who fall within the legislative authority of the federal government, including interprovincial transportation, banking and telecommunication. Provinces will need to introduce their own enabling legislation to make PRPPs available throughout Canada. The federal legislation is intended to be a model that the provinces can use to implement PRPPs within their own jurisdictions. A high level of harmonization of pension regulations across jurisdictions will be instrumental in increasing the availability of PRPPs and, more importantly, achieving lower costs. The federal government encourages provinces to implement the framework in a timely manner to help Canadians reach their retirement objectives.

With regard to (b) and (c), PRPPs will facilitate low costs through their scale and design. These plans will result in large pooled funds that will enable plan members to benefit from the lower investment management costs associated with such funds. The design of these plans will be straightforward, and these plans are intended to be largely harmonized across jurisdictions, which will facilitate lower administrative costs. In addition, the PRPP act requires the administrator to offer the PRPP at a low cost to plan members. The criteria for determining whether a PRPP is low cost will be set out in the accompanying regulations and will be monitored by the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. Finally, plain-language disclosure of all costs and fees will ensure transparency and facilitate price competition among administrators.

Question No. 274—**Hon. Judy Sgro:**

With regard to Bill C-25, An Act relating to pooled registered pension plans and making related amendments to other Acts (PRPP Act), will the regulations allow for private-sector plan managers, other than banks and insurance companies, to manage PRPP assets?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-25 specifies that eligible administrators must be corporations that can assume a fiduciary duty, such as regulated financial institutions and public pension plans. In order to offer a PRPP, administrators would need to obtain a licence from the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. The criteria for this licence will be set out in the regulations, and will not require administrators to be a bank or insurance company.

Question No. 275—**Hon. Judy Sgro:**

With regard to Bill C-25, An Act relating to pooled registered pension plans and making related amendments to other Acts (PRPP Act), does the government plan to incorporate limited or specific situational exemptions in the locking-in rules to allow Canadians of modest means emergency access to the funds accumulated in their PRPP account?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-25 includes locking-in provisions that are intended to ensure that funds are available for retirement income purposes. Funds in the members' accounts are generally not permitted to be withdrawn. Subject to the regulations accompanying the Bill, plan members may be permitted to withdraw funds from their accounts under certain circumstances, such as disability.

Question No. 282—**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:**

With respect to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration's power to exercise discretionary authority under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) to permit an individual, who would otherwise be inadmissible, to enter Canada: (a) how many times has the Minister exercised his discretionary authority in the last five years; and (b) in each such case, what reasons were provided to the Minister to explain why the individual had been deemed inadmissible?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), from 2005 to 2011, the minister exercised his authority to issue a temporary resident permit, TRP, a total of 2,167 times.

With regard to (b), given the number of cases involved, it would be extremely difficult and time-consuming for the Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CIC, to provide the reasons for refusal for each case in which a TRP was issued. However, the most prevalent reasons for refusal are non-compliance with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, IRPA. Non-compliance means an applicant directly or indirectly failed to satisfy the requirements of the act or the regulations.

Some examples are as follows: an individual was not examined when he or she entered Canada; an individual did not obtain a temporary resident visa (TRV) because a visa officer was not satisfied he or she was a genuine temporary resident to Canada who would leave at the end of an authorized stay; an individual's visa expired before he or she entered Canada; an individual did not have a passport or it expired before he or she entered Canada; an individual overstayed his or her period of authorized stay; or an individual worked or studied without authorization, a permit.

The number of TRPs issued by the minister and delegated officials of both CIC and Canada Border Service Agency, CBSA, is included in the annual reports to Parliament on immigration, which can be found at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/annual-report-2011.pdf>.

Question No. 284—**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:**

How many foreign nationals does the government estimate are currently in Canada without permanent or temporary working visas or student visas?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is currently not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the number of foreign nationals in Canada without permanent or temporary working visas or student visas. A more accurate picture would only be possible with exit tracking. The integrated entry and exit system that will be introduced under the Canada-U.S. perimeter security and economic competitiveness action plan will contribute to this objective.

*Routine Proceedings*

However, it is important to note that there are a number of ways a foreign national could be in Canada without a permanent or temporary visa or student visa. Examples include students in an educational program of less than three months; temporary foreign workers covered by international agreements, e.g., NAFTA; refugee claimants; and tourists from exempt visa countries.

**Question No. 285—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:**

With respect to individuals in Canada on temporary resident visas, does the government record the number of individuals who return to their home countries after their temporary resident visa has expired and, if so, how many foreign nationals do not return to their home countries once the temporary resident visa has expired?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the department tracks and has data on those who apply for temporary resident visas and their arrival into Canada. As Canada does not maintain exit controls or monitor temporary residents once in Canada, we are unable to provide statistics on overstays or returns.

**Question No. 288—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to the Gulf Fisheries Centre, located in Moncton, New Brunswick: (a) what are the terms and conditions of the shared ownership of the building between Public Works and Government Services Canada and SNC Lavalin; (b) what decision-making role does SNC Lavalin have in terms of requests for renovations and structural changes to the Gulf Fisheries Centre; (c) what decision-making role does SNC Lavalin have with regard to the potential sale of the Gulf Fisheries Centre; and (d) what are the terms and conditions of revenue sharing between Public Works and Government Services Canada and SNC Lavalin should the Gulf Fisheries Centre ever be sold?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the facility is a wholly crown-owned facility; therefore, there is no shared ownership of the Gulf Fisheries Centre.

With regard to (b), SNC Lavalin is required to identify, on an annual basis, repair and capital project work plans that are based on recommendations from building technical inspections or audits. Public Works and Government Services Canada then determines which of those projects will be approved and funded.

With regard to (c), SNC Lavalin has no decision-making role related to any potential sale of the Gulf Fisheries Centre.

With regard to (d), as per the aforementioned, the Gulf Fisheries Centre is a wholly crown-owned facility and SNC Lavalin is not a co-owner; therefore, there are no terms and conditions of revenue sharing between Public Works and Government Services Canada and SNC Lavalin.

**Question No. 291—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to all expenditures under \$10,000 by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency since January 1, 2006, what are the details of these expenditures, categorized by (i) the names of the people or organizations to whom the expenditures were made, (ii) the amounts of the expenditures per recipient, (iii) the dates the expenditures were issued, (iv) the description of the purpose of each expenditure?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, producing the information requested would involve translating and manually reviewing thousands of records and descriptions. In addition to being cost-prohibitive, producing and translating such a

voluminous response is not feasible in the time period required for this reply.

**Question No. 292—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' (DFO) budget cuts, including the loss of approximately 275 jobs over the next three years: (a) in what regions will these job losses occur; (b) in what DFO branches will the job losses occur; (c) how many jobs will be lost through (i) attrition, (ii) retirement, (iii) relocation; (d) what is the total payroll for employees that are expected to be cut; (e) what levels of public service seniority are expected to be most affected; (f) what is the projected impact on services to (i) fishers, (ii) the aquaculture industry; (g) how will DFO integrated management plans be affected; (h) how will the output of scientific data, studies, and reports be affected; (i) have any senior DFO officials been offered or given salary bonuses based on how much is cut from their specific budgets; and (j) what is the total DFO expenditure for these types of bonuses thus far in 2011?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a) and (b), staffing adjustments are the result of a national initiative and will occur in all regions and branches.

With regard to (c), at this time the department has only issued "affected" letters. As of now, we do not have indications from the employees if they are opting for retirement or other options. The department's annual attrition rate is 2%-6%, depending on the position.

With regard to (d), savings in staff salaries is estimated to be \$25,562,700.00.

With regard to (e), strategic review decisions were not based on the seniority of individual employees.

With regard to (f)(i) and (f)(ii), the implementation of this proposal will result in more transparent service standards for all stakeholders. Modernizing the fisheries management program and DFO in general will enable fish harvesters and the aquaculture industry to operate in an environment where stability, predictability and transparency will allow them to make more informed business choices and decisions for the long term.

With regard to (g), the use of multi-year integrated fisheries management plans will be expanded.

Where this approach does not already exist, fisheries management plans will be put on a stable, multi-year planning cycle, which means that plans are put in place for several years. This eliminates the instability for the industry that results from annual approaches. The industry will be better able to plan for the long term and maximize the potential of the harvest.

*Routine Proceedings*

Many fisheries do not show significant variation in stock status from year to year. These fisheries do not require detailed annual re-evaluations of their management plans.

With regard to (h), Fisheries and Oceans Canada believes science is an essential contributor to all resource management decision-making and that the management of science must continue to build upon the transformation already under way in order to complement efforts to modernize fisheries management and to strengthen its regulatory role. To achieve these objectives, DFO is accelerating the implementation of multi-year science to include many of the commercial stocks that the department manages but which show little year-to-year variation. This action will result in greater predictability of resource access for commercial fish harvesters. The continued transition to an ecosystem approach to science will put greater emphasis on scientists working in teams to address complex interrelated issues affecting fish, fish habitat and the integrity of aquatic environments. While the department will cease to conduct research on fish production issues in the aquaculture industry as this task is not aligned with the Department's core mandate, it will focus its aquaculture science activities in support of its regulatory duties related to fish health and environmental interactions. Finally, consolidation of the administrative management and priority-setting process with the Canadian Hydrographic Service will ensure that resources are focused on the high-priority charting activities that are most needed.

With regard to (i) and (j), there have been no salary bonuses based on budget cuts.

Question No. 297—**Mr. Massimo Pacetti:**

With regard to the funding of enterprises and projects by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA): (a) which enterprises or which projects that received direct or indirect funding from CIDA for fiscal years 2009, 2010 and 2011 have declared bankruptcy; (b) of these enterprises, which ones have not paid their Canadian employees or subcontractors; and (c) is the department continuing to fund enterprises that have declared bankruptcy, knowing that they have not paid their employees or subcontractors following their bankruptcy?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the fiduciary risk of enterprises and partners is assessed by the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA, as part of rigorous due diligence in advance of project investment and funding decisions. Agency corporate data systems do not retain information on enterprises or partners that received direct or indirect funding and have subsequently declared bankruptcy. A complete response would require additional time to compile the information requested, following a review of individual projects.

With regard to (b), the agency does not gather third party information related to enterprises' agreements with their subcontractors, consultants or employees. The agency takes considerable care not to interfere in the commercial dealings between enterprises and their subcontractors, consultants or employees in order to mitigate risks as well as limit potential legal liability to the crown.

With regard to (c), the agency will not knowingly fund or make payments to a partner organization or enterprise that has declared bankruptcy. Furthermore, as a condition to release of holdbacks and final payment, contractual agreements signed with enterprises require prior certification that all financial obligations to employees,

sub-contractors or suppliers have been fully discharged. When the agency has been made aware of false declarations on the part of enterprises, they will be pursued by the agency to the full extent of the law.

An important distinction should be made between enterprises that have declared bankruptcy and those that may have legally sought temporary protection from creditors through the courts in order to restructure operations to avoid bankruptcy. In such rare situations, the agency will work constructively with all stakeholders and will endeavour to ensure that enterprises in receipt of CIDA funding conduct their affairs in manner that abides with the laws of Canada, particularly with respect to Canadian subcontractors, employees and suppliers.

Question No. 299—**Hon. Ralph Goodale:**

With regard to the Department of National Defence, how much did the department spend to conduct the reconnaissance flight to find a suitable landing spot near the Burnt Rattle fishing camp on the Gander River to pick up the Minister of National Defence in July 2010?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, no dedicated reconnaissance flight was conducted for this mission. The reconnaissance was conducted by the standby crew on a normal training flight in Newfoundland. On their return to 9 Wing Gander, they overflowed the area in question to conduct the reconnaissance. The added time to overfly the area was negligible and did not result in any additional costs.

Question No. 303—**Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to the criteria governing the granting of single and multiple entry visas: (a) what are the criteria used to determine whether an applicant is approved or rejected for a single-entry visa; (b) what are the criteria used to determine whether an applicant is approved or rejected for a multiple-entry visa; and (c) what are the reasons that an applicant might be granted a single-entry visa but denied a multiple-entry visa?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC)** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the criteria governing the granting of single and multiple entry visas and with regard to (a), the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act gives visa officers outside Canada the authority to review temporary resident visa applications and make their decisions based on the criteria outlined in the act and the regulations.

Visa officers consider several factors before deciding if a person is admissible. The person must be a genuine visitor to Canada who will leave at the end of the visit. In addition, the visa officer must be satisfied that the applicant is not inadmissible to Canada according to the Act. The applicant may be considered inadmissible under grounds related to security, human or international rights violations, criminality, organized crime, health, or financial reasons. A visa will be issued if all regulatory requirements and eligibility criteria are satisfied.

With regard to (b), the criteria for multiple entry visas are the same as above.

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With regard to (c), the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act gives visa officers outside Canada the authority to review temporary resident visa applications and make their decisions based on the criteria outlined in the act and the regulations. Applicants indicate on their application form if they wish a single-entry or multiple-entry visa and pay the requisite fee. In Canadian dollars, the processing fee for a single-entry visa is \$75, while a multiple-entry is \$150. An applicant who has requested a multiple-entry visa but who has only paid the processing fee for a single-entry visa would be issued a single-entry visa.

If the applicant has requested and paid the processing fee for a multiple-entry visa, a multiple-entry visa would normally be issued. The departmental procedure, as outlined in the operational manual, is that if officers have doubts about issuing a multiple entry visa, they should normally refuse the application rather than compromise and grant a single-entry visa. However, in some circumstances, an officer may decide to issue a single-entry visa based on the particulars of the case and must justify this in the case notes. An example of such circumstance would be when the purpose of the applicant's travel is to attend a singular event and is being funded by a credible third party.

**Question No. 307—Mr. David McGuinty:**

With regard to the Department of Natural Resources and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, as a follow-up to Q-85 and Q-92, given that the Low Level Radioactive Waste Management Office (LLRWMO) has a mandate to service all of Canada and the Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office has a mandate to service only the Port Hope area, what are the reasons why the Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office currently employs more than three times as many staff as the LLRWMO?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the low-level radioactive waste management office, the LLRWMO, was established by the Government of Canada in 1982, as a distinct unit within Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. The mandate of the LLRWMO when it was established was to clean up and dispose of historic wastes. Historic wastes are defined as those that have been managed in a manner that is no longer appropriate, for which the owner or producer cannot be identified or held reasonably responsible, and for which the Government of Canada has accepted responsibility.

The bulk of Canada's historic wastes, more than 90%, are located in the Port Hope area of southeastern Ontario. In 2009, the Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office, the PHAI MO, was established as a limited-term, dedicated management office with the overall responsibility to plan, manage and implement the cleanup of historic low-level radioactive wastes within the Port Hope area. Once the cleanup is completed, the PHAI MO will be disbanded.

The LLRWMO continues to provide ongoing monitoring, inspection and maintenance at numerous smaller scale historic waste sites across Canada. The LLRWMO's staff reflects its current level of activities.

**Question No. 308—Mr. David McGuinty:**

Does the Department of Natural Resources have any plans to abolish the Low Level Radioactive Waste Management Office or merge it with another office?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office, LLRWMO, was established by the Government of Canada in 1982,

with a mandate to resolve federal and historic low-level radioactive waste responsibilities.

There are no plans to abolish the LLRWMO or to merge it with another office as there is an ongoing need to clean up and manage historic waste that is a federal responsibility.

**Question No. 310—Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office, for all correspondence they have received between February 6, 2006, and December 1, 2011, and which was addressed to the Prime Minister, how many pieces of correspondence had personal contact information recorded and transferred to the Conservative Party of Canada?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Privy Council Office, PCO, has not recorded and transferred any personal contact information from correspondence to the Conservative Party of Canada.

**Question No. 315—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:**

With regard to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, does the department have any plans to close Canadian embassies, consulates or missions abroad and, if so, which ones?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada is committed to supporting a robust diplomatic role for Canada that focuses on key foreign policy priorities and services to Canadians.

We are constantly reviewing our network of missions, modernizing our practices, reallocating resources internally and seeking new ways of delivering on the government's foreign policy objectives in an ever-changing world. Innovation, efficiency and effectiveness are the principles that guide the department as it serves Canadians in Canada and abroad.

The government continuously monitors its representation abroad and periodically shifts resources to meet Canada's needs. We do this to fulfill our commitment to being responsible with taxpayer dollars while also doing our part to eliminate the federal deficit, as announced during the 2011 election campaign.

To this end and as part of the deficit reduction action plan, all departments, including DFAIT, are exploring options to find savings and deliver value for money, and working to reduce wasteful and ineffective spending. Many programs are under review. No decisions have yet been finalized.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 316—Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to the Northern Resident Deduction: (a) what is the current criteria for a community to qualify for the deduction; (b) what was the criteria for a community to qualify for the deduction before Tax Regulation 7303 was amended, as printed in the Canada Gazette Part II, Income Tax Regulations, amendment SOR/93-440; (c) what was the rationale for any change in criteria; and (d) what was the rationale for excluding all previously included remote areas in Newfoundland from the Northern Resident Deduction in both Zone A and Zone B after the change in policy?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the northern residents deduction assists Canada's northern and isolated regions draw skilled labour to their communities by providing recognition for the additional costs faced by residents of these areas.

The current zonal system of tax benefits for northern residents was established following an extensive review of the former community-based system by the 1988 Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas.

Under the former system, eligibility was as follows: all communities north of 60°N latitude were eligible. Communities having a population of less than 10,000 located between 55°N latitude and 60°N were eligible if they were over 80 kilometres by all-weather road from the city or town hall of the nearest urban centre, or they had no all-weather road. Communities having a population of less than 10,000 located south of 55°N latitude and scoring at least 50 points for factors relating to population, access, vegetation type and climate were eligible if: they had no all-weather road and were over 80 kilometres in a straight line from the city hall or the nearest urban centre with a population of 50,000 or more; or they had an all-weather road and were more than 160 kilometres from the town or city hall of the nearest urban centre with a population of 10,000 or more, and were over 320 kilometres from the city hall of the nearest urban centre with a population of 50,000 or more.

Starting in 1988, the task force held extensive consultations across the country and concluded that determining eligibility for the tax deductions for residents of northern and isolated areas was arbitrary and divisive. Residents of neighbouring communities were being treated differently for tax purposes, even though they often shared common workplaces, services, and cultural and recreational facilities.

In October 1989, the task force recommended a zonal approach, where only communities within a "northern zone" would qualify for tax benefits. The boundaries of the northern zone were delineated with a view to ensuring that communities in the zone had similar characteristics. The task force used objective criteria to compare communities on the basis of isolation, nordicity, community characteristics and environmental factors. The task force also attempted to minimize border delineation problems by having as much separation as possible between qualifying and non-qualifying communities.

The task force recommended a northern zone and, following further consultations, an intermediate zone was added to bridge the gap between the northern zone and the less isolated areas of the country. The approach used by the task force to design the northern zone was also applied in developing the intermediate zone. The same

ranking system was used and efforts were made to minimize border problems.

It was recognized that the intermediate zone, in relation to the northern zone, covers regions in which the communities are characterized as being more populated, in greater proximity and less homogeneous, thereby making the task of setting borders more challenging. Given this reality, regardless of where the borders were set, there would inevitably be communities across the country that would be disappointed with their exclusion. It was determined at the time that the final border design incorporated fair trade-offs in difficult circumstances that were deemed workable in a broad-based, national tax system.

The new system of northern benefits took effect starting in 1991.

Since the implementation of the zonal boundaries, the underlying factors used to establish them have remained constant, even in regions where populations (the most variable indicator) have changed in the following years.

**Question No. 318—Hon. Denis Coderre:**

With regard to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, how many Temporary Residency Permit applications were submitted to the department by the current Member for Brampton—Springdale before May 2, 2011?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the department does not track temporary residence permit, TRP, applications this way; therefore CIC cannot answer the member's question.

**Question No. 321—Hon. Denis Coderre:**

With respect to Minister's Regional Offices, what is the itemized list of expenses for hospitality, food, drink, hotels and transportation for each Minister's Regional Office since 2006?

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, ministers' regional offices are subject to the "Policies for Ministers' Offices—January 2011". Information regarding hospitality, meals and incidentals, accommodation and transportation must be made available through proactive disclosure. This information can be found on individual departmental websites and is updated quarterly.

**Question No. 322—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:**

With respect to the fiscal framework in the year 2015-2016 and the \$600 million surplus identified in the 2011 Update of Economic and Fiscal Projections, how will the budgetary balance be affected by government plans to (i) double the value of the Children's Fitness Tax Credit and make it refundable, (ii) introduce an Adult Fitness Tax Credit, (iii) allow spouses to share up to \$50,000 of their household income for federal income tax purposes, (iv) double the Tax Free Savings Account limit?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government's tax-related campaign commitments, as clearly stated in the 2011 election platform "Here for Canada", will be implemented when the federal budget is balanced and reflected at that time.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 323—Mr. Justin Trudeau:**

With regard to the 2006 Economic and Fiscal Update's commitment to work towards the elimination of Canada's total government net debt by 2021: (a) what progress has been made to date; and (b) what is the current target date to reduce Canada's total government net debt to zero?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, net debt differs from the federal debt as it is defined as total liabilities less financial assets, while the federal debt is defined as total liabilities less total assets. Furthermore, the target that was established in 2006 is for total government net debt on a national accounts basis (excluding government employee unfunded pension liabilities to conform with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development measure of net debt), which includes not only the federal net debt, but also the net debt of provincial-territorial and local governments, as well as the assets of the Canada pension plan and Quebec pension plan.

Balanced budgets and low levels of public debt are critical to Canada's long-term growth and prosperity.

That is why, since taking office in 2006, the government aggressively reduced the federal debt by nearly \$40 billion from 2005-06 to 2007-08. However, in response to the deepest and most synchronized global recession since the Great Depression, the government made a difficult, but necessary, decision to run temporary deficits in order to make investments to protect Canadians under Canada's Economic Action Plan, leading to a short-term increase in federal debt.

The Government of Canada is committed to returning to balanced budgets in the medium term. Budget 2010 announced a three-point plan to support a return to balanced budgets (for more information, please visit <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2010/plan/chap4a-eng.html>). Building on that plan, budget 2011 outlined further savings by delivering on the 2010 round of strategic reviews, as well as taking action to close tax loopholes (for more information, please visit <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2011/plan/chap5-eng.html>).

To maintain Canada's solid fiscal position, in budget 2011, the government also announced its deficit reduction action plan, which will review direct program spending in order to achieve at least \$4 billion in ongoing annual savings by 2014-15. This review will place particular emphasis on generating savings from operating expenses and improving productivity, while also examining the relevance and effectiveness of programs. Savings proposals are currently being assessed by a specially constituted committee of Treasury Board. The government will report on the results of this review in budget 2012. These savings will support a return to balanced budgets by 2015-16. The budgetary savings associated with the deficit reduction action plan will be reflected in the fiscal projections once these actions are determined and implemented in budget 2012.

**Question No. 324—Mr. Justin Trudeau :**

With respect to Environment Canada's water-monitoring stations in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut: (a) when did Environment Canada begin considering shutting down 21 stations in the Northwest Territories and 10 stations in Nunavut; (b) what studies were undertaken to estimate the impact of the closures; (c) what consultations, if any, were conducted with the territorial governments about the closures; (d) when were the territorial governments alerted that a decision had been

made to shut the stations down; and (e) when was the decision to shut the stations down reversed?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Environment Canada did not shut down water quality monitoring in the north. During July 2011, some data collection had been temporarily suspended while the department was undertaking the development of a risk-based assessment, RBA, framework for water quality monitoring. The new framework is part of EC's commitment to improve its operations in response to a recommendation in the 2010 fall report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

However, as directed by the Minister of Environment in August, the department resumed all normal monitoring in the north while the risk-based assessment framework is being developed.

The RBA framework is a science-based tool that will help ensure scientific validity and value for Environment Canada's water quality monitoring investments. Under the framework, sites that are rated as being a high risk to water quality will be monitored more frequently, while sites judged to be a low risk will be monitored less frequently. This approach will ensure that the department's science and monitoring resources, including those devoted to our work in the north, are focused on monitoring the greatest risks to water quality in Canada's lakes and rivers.

As the development of the RBA framework is nearing completion, Environment Canada is consulting with its stakeholders, including provincial and territorial governments, to ensure we have their input and perspectives before any final decisions on the water monitoring program are made.

**Question No. 325—Mr. Justin Trudeau:**

With regard to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), how much has the department spent to install the portraits of Her Majesty the Queen, the Prime Minister and all DFAIT Ministers at all of Canada's Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates and Foreign Missions?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, virtually every other country in the world displays pictures of their head of state in their diplomatic missions. All Canadian missions abroad are expected to display pictures of Canada's head of state, the Queen, along with pictures of the Governor General, the Prime Minister and relevant ministers.

In September 2011, Canadian missions were asked to update, download and/or print official portraits, at no cost, using the departmental catalogue. For the 20 missions that needed to update photos already at mission, digital photos were provided free of charge and printed in place. Missions were responsible for framing. The overall cost for that is estimated to be less than \$1,000.

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**Question No. 326—Mr. Justin Trudeau:**

With regard to the Department of Canadian Heritage and its plans to commemorate the War of 1812: (a) what is the complete list of planned events; (b) how much is the government spending on each event; and (c) where is each event located?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the complete list of activities and events is yet to be finalized.

We invite you to visit the War of 1812 website at <http://1812.gc.ca/eng/1305744041669/1305744100939> on a regular basis for the latest information regarding the commemoration, including the release of the calendar of events and federal department and agency initiatives and events, including those of Canadian Heritage.

**Question No. 330—Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and, more specifically, Small Craft Harbours (SCH), how many properties under the ownership of SCH have been diversified each year from 2006 to 2011 inclusively, (i) in what community and province were each of these properties located, (ii) what was the assessed value of each of these properties at the time of diversification, (iii) what financial transactions took place (i.e., amounts) as part of the diversification plan, (iv) who received financial compensation and who paid financial compensation for the diversified properties?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the small craft harbours program does not have a diversification strategy and does not manage its properties by diversifying them.

**Question No. 341—Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

With regard to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) under the Old Age Security program and changes in the government's policies dealing with Registered Retirement Income Funds for the purposes of exercising a GIS, GIS Allowance and GIS Allowance for the Survivor option since May, 2010: (a) how many requests for an option were received between May 17 and December 31, 2010, and how many requests for an option were received in 2011; (b) how many requests were rejected in each quarter of the calendar year as a result of the revised policy circulated on May 17, 2010; (c) how many of those requests which had been rejected in each quarter were subsequently reviewed and overturned in the course of each calendar year; (d) how many requests for an option are currently being reviewed for consideration; and (e) what is the average processing time for each application?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), for the period May 17 to December 31, 2010, the department received approximately 68,800 requests for an option. In 2011, the department received approximately 126,800 option requests.

In response to (b), statistics are not compiled quarterly. However, of the 6,752 beneficiaries who withdrew additional amounts from a registered retirement income fund, RRIF, in 2008 and 2009, 171 were not granted an option as a result of the revised policy. Of the 1,221 beneficiaries who withdrew additional amounts from a RRIF in 2010, 7 were not granted an option.

In response to (c), all 178 of the accounts not granted an option were reviewed and subsequently granted an option. These clients received an adjusted payment based on the February 2004 policy.

In response to (d), currently, there are 36,484 requests for an option to be reviewed in the Service Canada work item inventory distribution system.

In response to (e), in 2010-11, the average processing time for option requests was 33 days. For the current year, the average processing time is 29 days.

**Question No. 343—Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

With regard to the operations and management of Marine Atlantic Incorporated (MAI) and consultants' reports presented to MAI or Transport Canada by Fleetway Incorporated and by Oceanic Consulting Corporation since January 1, 2005, what are the details of these reports with respect to the consultants' reviews, analysis, findings and recommendations on MAI's ferry replacement options?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Marine Atlantic Inc., MAI, reports which summarize the extensive work done by the consultants can be found on the corporation's website: <http://www.marine-atlantic.ca/eng/publications.asp>.

**Question No. 344—Hon. Stéphane Dion:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the closing of the search and rescue centres in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Québec City, Quebec: (a) what is the cost of relocating people from St. John's and Québec City to either Trenton or Halifax; (b) what is the cost of linking, with a secure telephone line, the Halifax and Trenton coordination centres to emergency centres in the provinces of Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador; (c) what are the bilingual capabilities of the centres in Halifax and Trenton and what is their capacity to answer two different emergency calls simultaneously in French for both centres; (d) what is the cost of adapting each centre in Halifax and Trenton to deal with the increase in the number of calls that they will have to handle; and (e) how will the territory be split between the centres in Halifax and Trenton?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), no employees from the St. John's and Quebec Marine Rescue Sub-Centres elected to relocate to the Halifax or Trenton Joint Coordination Centres. Therefore, there are no relocation costs at this time.

In response to (b), annual total overhead costs for telecommunications services will not change. The costs of transferring lines to emergency centres from St. John's and Quebec to Halifax and Trenton are still under review.

In response to (c), language requirements at Halifax and Quebec are currently set at the BBB level by the Coast Guard and deemed satisfactory by previous reviews conducted by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Following consolidation, both the Trenton and Halifax Joint Rescue Coordination Centres will have the capacity to provide services in both official languages and bilingual capacity at the CBC level, an increase above the levels that are now in place at both Halifax and Trenton. The level of bilingual service is regularly reviewed by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

In response to (d), one-time implementation costs for relocations, training, meetings with partners and project management are estimated at \$700,000.



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In response to (e), currently, the Quebec Marine Rescue Sub-Centre is responsible for a portion of both the Search and Rescue Region of Halifax and Trenton Joint Rescue Coordination Centres. The St. John's Marine Rescue Sub-Centre is responsible for a portion of the Halifax Joint Rescue Coordination Centre search and rescue region. Following consolidation, Halifax and Trenton Joint Rescue Coordination Centres will be responsible for coordinating all incident responses within their own defined search and rescue regions.

Question No. 350—**Hon. Stéphane Dion:**

With respect to every First Nation in Canada for which the government carries a fiduciary responsibility: (a) what is the total number of members belonging to each First Nation; (b) how many of these members actually live on each First Nation; (c) how many and what type of residential dwellings are available to house those members living on each First Nation; (d) what is the number of persons per dwelling; and (e) what is the average number of persons per dwelling for all other Canadians not living on First Nations?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a) and (b), please refer to “Registered Indian Population by Sex and Residence 2010,” found on the department’s website at: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2011/aicn-inac/R31-3-2010-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/aicn-inac/R31-3-2010-eng.pdf).

In response to (c), according to first nations’ reports, there were 106,373 houses on reserve as of 2010-11. Below is a list of the total number of homes on first nations broken down by region: Atlantic: 7,132—Quebec: 10,171—Ontario: 24,404—Manitoba: 16,046—Saskatchewan: 14,180—Alberta: 14,578—Yukon: 582—British Columbia: 19,280.

The provision and management of housing on reserve lands is the responsibility of first nations, and therefore chief and council are responsible for determining which types of dwellings should be constructed to meet the needs of band members. According to data from the 2006 census, 82.2% of households lived in single-family detached homes, 2.8% lived in apartments, 6.4% lived in other multiple dwellings, and 8.6% lived in movable dwellings.

In response to (d), according to 2006 census data, the average household size on reserve was 3.67 people. Below is a list of the average number of persons per dwelling broken down by region: Newfoundland and Labrador: 3.67; Prince Edward Island: 3.03; Nova Scotia: 3.03; New Brunswick: 2.84; Quebec: 3.89; Ontario: 3.24; Manitoba: 4.09; Saskatchewan: 4.14; Alberta: 4.09; British Columbia: 3.22; Yukon: 2.34; Northwest Territories: 3.53.

According to first nations’ reports, the average number of persons per dwelling on first nations across Canada was 3.57 as of 2010-11. Below is a list of average number of persons per dwelling broken down by region: Atlantic: 2.77; Quebec: 3.40; Ontario: 2.99; Manitoba: 5.03; Saskatchewan: 4.24; Alberta: 3.95; Yukon: 1.88; British Columbia: 2.76.

In response to (e), according to Census data, the average household size in Canada was 2.5 people in 2006.

Question No. 363—**Hon. Scott Brison:**

With regard to the Department of Canadian Heritage, what is the (i) date, (ii) time, (iii) location, (iv) nature of all government business conducted by Saulie Zajdel since his employment started?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Saulie Zajdel is a regional adviser to the Minister of Canadian Heritage in the minister’s regional office in Montreal, and an exempt staff member. The department does not manage the day-to-day activities of an exempt staff member in a minister’s office.

Question No. 364—**Hon. Scott Brison:**

With regard to the Minister of Public Safety’s Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee: (a) what is the complete membership list of this committee; (b) for every meeting held since January 1, 2008, what is the exact (i) time, (ii) date, (iii) place; and (c) how much has the committee spent on travel and hospitality since 2008?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the following is the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee membership list: 1. Ms. Linda Baggaley; 2. Mr. Steve Torino; 3. Mr. Tony Bernardo; 4. Mr. Alain Cossette; 5. Mr. Louis D’Amour; 6. Mr. Greg Farrant; 7. Mr. Gerry Gamble; 8. Mr. John Gayder; 9. Mr. Murray Grismer; 10. Mr. Kerry Higgins; 11. Professor Emeritus Gary Mauser; 12. Ms. Linda Thom.

In response to (b), the meetings held since January 1, 2008 are as follows: Meeting No. 1: i) 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.; ii) June 27, 2008; iii) Teleconference.

Meeting No. 2: i) Day 1, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Day 2, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; ii) April 29 and 30, 2009; iii) Hotel Indigo Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario.

Meeting No. 3: i) 7:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.; ii) June 16, 2010; iii) Teleconference.

Meeting No. 4: i) Day 1, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Day 2, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; ii) November 30 and December 1, 2010; iii) Sheraton Ottawa Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario.

In response to (c), travel costs for meetings held since January 2008 total \$19,863.13 and the associated hospitality costs total \$4,238.36.

Question No. 378—**Mr. Kennedy Stewart:**

With regard to consultations with Canadians by the Minister of Natural Resources on the subject of energy since May 18, 2011: (a) who did the Minister consult with and when did these consultations occur; (b) what events did the Minister attend that involved consultations, and where did these consultations occur; (c) which consultations involved discussion of a national energy strategy; (d) when will results of the aforementioned consultations be presented publicly; and (e) what is the government’s policy on developing a national energy strategy?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has met with numerous stakeholders and Canadians regarding their energy priorities. These include industry, stakeholder, environmental and economist groups. The minister has also met frequently with his provincial counterparts.

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In addition, the minister took part in the Energy and Mines Ministers' Conference, EMMC, in July 2011. The EMMC includes a formal opportunity for invited stakeholders to meet with ministers around a particular theme and focus. The primary focus of the 2011 EMMC held on July 18 and 19, 2011, in Kananaskis, Alberta, was the development of a collaborative approach to energy to guide federal, provincial and territorial government energy policies. The development of a pan-Canadian approach to greater energy collaboration was discussed.

In July 2011, ministers at the EMMC approved a document, "Canada as a Global Energy Leader: Toward Greater Pan-Canadian Collaboration", and a corresponding action plan. This information, along with the official EMMC communiqué, has been publicly posted on the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's website and can be accessed at the following website: [www.scics.gc.ca/english/conferences.asp?x=1&a=view&id=2611&y=&m](http://www.scics.gc.ca/english/conferences.asp?x=1&a=view&id=2611&y=&m).

At the 2011 EMMC, a collaborative approach to energy was released, based on a set of common principles. These include a market-oriented approach to energy governed by effective regulatory systems, ensuring mutual respect for jurisdiction, recognizing the importance of sustainable energy development and use, and acknowledging the need for an adequate and reliable supply of energy.

The government will continue to work with provincial and territorial governments, industry stakeholders and all Canadians to further strengthen our approach and to ensure that our energy policies are coordinated and serve the best interests of Canadians.

**Question No. 379—Mr. Kennedy Stewart:**

With regard to grants, contributions and contracts by Western Economic Diversification Canada since January 1, 2001: (a) what funding applications were approved by the Minister's office, as identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) number of times previously submitted, (iv) date approved, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount awarded, (vii) sector, (viii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (b) what funding applications were rejected by the Minister's office, identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) total amount of submitted applications, (iv) date rejected, (v) amount requested, (vi) sector, (vii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (c) for each federal electoral district, what is the total value of funding requests that were (i) approved, (ii) rejected; and (d) what untendered contracts were issued by or on behalf of the Minister?

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Western Economic Diversification Canada is unable to respond to this request in the time allotted due to the volume of information requested.

**Question No. 380—Ms. Elizabeth May:**

With regard to the recommendation made by Jeremy Wallace, Deputy Director of Climate Change at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), that funding provisionally approved on April 29, 2011, by the DFAIT Planning, Advocacy, and Innovation Office, for the purpose of supporting an art exhibition by Canadian artist Franke James in Eastern Europe, be cancelled based on a determination that, "concerns that the funding proposed would not be consistent with our interests (...) and would in fact run counter to Canada's interests more broadly": (a) what specific criteria and evidence did the government use to determine that Ms. James' art exhibition would constitute a threat to the interests of Canada; (b) for each correspondence, including e-mails, that relate to this determination, including those between Ministers' exempt staff and departmental staff at DFAIT, (i) what are its details, (ii) what are the names of the sender and recipients, (iii) on what date was it sent; (c) on what evidence did DFAIT rely in order to justify the redactions, under Sections 20(1)(c), 21(1)(b), and 15(1) of the Access to Information Act, to the correspondence released to Ms. James under her Access to Information

Act request on this matter on August 16, 2011; and (d) with regard to the Right to Freedom of Speech enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, on what legal grounds did DFAIT base its decision to withdraw support and revoke Ms. James' allotted funding?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), missions submit advocacy project proposals to the Planning, Advocacy and Innovation Division at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which are then reviewed and assessed against Government of Canada priorities. It is common practice for the officials involved and our missions to have back and forth discussions regarding these proposals, before making final eligibility decisions. The recommendation from the Climate Change and Energy Division was based on current priority areas for climate change funding, including the provision of support to assist vulnerable countries in tangible ways to adapt to climate change, and to support their substantive participation in international climate change negotiations.

In response to (b)(i), on May 2, 2011, a request was forwarded by a public affairs counsellor at the Canadian embassy in Rome, enclosing exchanges with a cultural affairs officer at the Canadian embassy in Zagreb. The exchange provided further background and discussion on the proposal.

In response to (b)(ii), the above-mentioned email communication was from a public affairs counsellor at the Canadian embassy in Rome to the Climate Change and Energy Division, enclosing exchanges with a cultural affairs officer in the Canadian embassy in Zagreb.

In response to (b)(iii), May 2 and April 21, 2011.

In response to (c), in order to redact information requested under the Access to Information Act, DFAIT relies on recommendations from subject matter experts within the program areas who provided the records, recommendations from other involved program areas, as well as the review and discretion exercised by experienced officials within the Access to Information division. Information was redacted in certain instances where its release was determined to cause a specific, current and probably injury. Paragraph 20(1)(c) was invoked to exempt sensitive financial information belonging to a third party. Paragraph 21(1)(b) was invoked to protect the frank exchange of ideas between government officers. Subsection 15(1)—International was invoked in some instances to protect Canada's position for the purpose of international negotiations, and in others to protect Canada's relations with foreign governments.

*Routine Proceedings*

In response to (d), Foreign Affairs and International Trade provides operational funds to Canadian missions to promote and defend Canada's interests abroad in line with government priorities. While funding for the mission project proposal was identified and provisionally approved by DFAIT, upon further consultations, we did not provide funds to our mission in Zagreb. Thus funding to the artist was never given, nor was it withdrawn. Any implication of political interference involving DFAIT's decision is false.

**Question No. 382—Ms. Elizabeth May:**

With regard to the current and projected impacts of anthropogenic climatic change and disruption including, but not limited to, increasing water scarcity, forest fire frequency and severity, degradation of permafrost-dependent infrastructure, frequency of extreme weather events including floods and heat waves, sea level rise, and the spread of vector-borne diseases such as Lyme Disease, for each department, what are the detailed current and projected economic costs associated with adapting to the aforementioned effects over the short, medium, and long term?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no relevant program area within Environment Canada that may be in a position to provide relevant information and/or documents concerning the economic costs associated with anthropogenic climate change impacts.

**Question No. 386—Hon. Wayne Easter:**

With regard to the airports in Canada for which the lands or infrastructure are owned by the government: (a) what studies has Transport Canada or any entity under contract with a department undertaken regarding a review of the National Airport Policy, including the privatization of these airports and what airports are being considered for privatization in any such study; (b) what are the revenues for the government anticipated in any such study regarding the privatization of airports, (i) as a whole, (ii) listed individually by airport; (c) what advice have consultants KPMG or any other entity under contract with the government given on the privatization of airports currently owned by the government; and (d) what is the current annual revenue paid to the government by airports for rent?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), Transport Canada, TC, is committed to ensuring that its policy framework for airports allows the industry to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future. While a formal review of the national airports policy is not under way, internal work is ongoing including analysis, as well as stakeholder engagement. The issues being examined include those raised by stakeholders and commentators, and focus on the state of the air industry in Canada generally, and the competitiveness of the industry. TC has not contracted with external parties for any studies concerning the possible sale of the national airport system, NAS, airports. There are no plans at present to privatize and/or sell airports.

In response to (b), as noted above, there has been no work undertaken regarding the sale or potential valuation of any NAS airport.

In response to (c), Transport Canada has not contracted with any external consultants to provide advice regarding the privatization of airports.

In response to (d), the airport rent received by the federal government in 2010 was \$243 million. The amounts can be found through the main estimates at <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr/2010-2011/inst/mot/st-ts01-eng.asp>.

**Question No. 401—Hon. Hedy Fry:**

What is the estimated cost of the government's response to question 385 on the Order Paper?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as many responses to MPs' written questions referred to in Question No. 385 from the member for Fort McMurray-Athabaska are scheduled for tabling in the House of Commons on January 30, 2012, the cost of producing these responses is still being compiled and will be provided in a supplementary response to Question No. 385. As a result, the government is not currently in a position to provide a costing for Question No. 385 at this time.

**Question No. 406—Hon. Jim Karygiannis:**

With respect to the three programs supported by the Global Peace and Security Fund: (a) concerning the Global Peace and Security Program, (i) what projects have been approved in the last fiscal year and this year, (ii) what has the budget been for the last fiscal year and this year, (iii) what is the proposed budget for next year; (b) concerning the Global Peace Operation Program, (i) what projects have been approved in the last fiscal year and this year, (ii) what has the budget been for the last fiscal year and this year, (iii) what is the proposed budget for next year; and (c) concerning the Glyn Berry Program, (i) what projects have been approved in the last fiscal year and this year, (ii) what has the budget been for the last fiscal year and this year, (iii) what is the proposed budget for next year?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to (a)(i), a total of 85 projects were approved during fiscal year 2010-11, and a total of 23 projects approved for fiscal year 2011-12.

In response to (a)(ii), the budget for fiscal year 2010-11 was \$107,256,520 and for fiscal year 2011-12 is \$91,396,000.

In response to (a)(iii), the budget for fiscal year 2012-13 is \$92,696,000.

In response to (b)(i), a total of 11 projects were approved during fiscal year 2010-11, and a total of 4 projects approved for fiscal year 2011-12.

In response to (b)(ii), the budget for fiscal year 2010-11 was \$13,700,000 and for fiscal year 2011-12 is \$13,700,000.

In response to (b)(iii), the budget for fiscal year 2012-13 is \$8,000,000.

In response to (c) (i), a total of 29 projects were approved during fiscal year 2010-11, and a total of 5 projects approved for fiscal year 2011-12.

In response to (c)(ii), the budget for fiscal year 2010-11 was \$5,000,000 and for fiscal year 2011-12 is \$5,000,000.

In response to (c)(iii), the budget for fiscal year 2012-13 is \$5,000,000.

A project is considered 'approved' if it has gone through all of the required levels of approvals and is either initiated, ongoing, or closed within a given fiscal year.

*Routine Proceedings*

Fiscal year 2011-12 is not yet complete therefore data provided is a partial response.

For specific information on the projects approved by START with a value of more than \$25,000, please refer to the proactive disclosure section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada website: [http://w03.international.gc.ca/dg-do/index\\_fa-ae.aspx?lang=eng&p=3&r=r](http://w03.international.gc.ca/dg-do/index_fa-ae.aspx?lang=eng&p=3&r=r).

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• (1520)

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 199-202, 204, 206, 207, 211, 213, 214, 216-218, 220, 222-231, 234, 235, 237, 238, 239, 241-244, 250, 252, 256, 257, 260-264, 266-272, 276-281, 283, 286, 287, 289, 290, 293-296, 298, 300-302, 304-306, 309, 311-314, 317, 319, 320, 327-329, 331-333, 335-337, 340, 342, 345-349, 351, 353-362, 365-376, 381, 383-385, 387-393, 396-400 and 402-405 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 199—**Mr. Raymond Côté:**

What is the total amount of government funding since fiscal year 2004-2005, up to and including the current fiscal year, allocated within the constituency of Beauport—Limoilou, identifying each department or agency, initiative and amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 200—**Mr. Peter Stoffer:**

With respect to the Canadian Forces (CF): (a) what is the total number of men and women who served in the CF from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; (b) what is the breakdown of CF members who served in the Navy, Airforce, and Land force sections respectively from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; (c) how many members of the CF have been medically released from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; (d) what is the breakdown of CF members who have been medically released within the Navy, Airforce, and Land force sections from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; (e) what are the details on how many members are medically released in the factors comprising the following medical categories (i) visual, (ii) colour, (iii) hearing, (iv) geographical factor, (v) occupational factor, (vi) air factor; (f) how many currently serving CF members are in receipt of a disability pension from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; (g) how many currently serving personnel are in receipt of the Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) Long Term Disability (LTD) insurance from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; (h) how many medically released CF personnel are in receipt of the SISIP from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; (i) how many medically released CF personnel are in receipt of a disability pension from VAC from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; (j) what is the total number of ex-CF personnel receiving a disability pension from VAC from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; (k) how many members of the CF have been assigned on a temporary basis Medical Employment Limitations from 2001 to 2011 inclusively; and (l) how many members of the CF have been assigned on a permanent basis Medical Employment Limitations from 2001 to 2011 inclusively?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 201—**Mr. Peter Stoffer:**

With respect to the Canadian Forces (CF) Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act (New Veterans Charter): (a) is there a provision for former CF members to access the benefits of a public service dental

care plan by paying monthly premiums; (b) has Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) considered providing former CF members access to a public service dental care plan by paying monthly premiums; (c) what would be the projected cost to the government for providing former CF members access to the Public Service Dental Care Plan; (d) has the government considered providing a caregiver or attendant allowance for family members who take care of severely disabled veterans under the New Veterans Charter; (e) has a quality assurance program of various programs within the New Veterans Charter been completed; (f) when does VAC plan to undertake a quality assurance program of various programs under the New Veterans Charter; (g) what is the name of the consortium that is subcontracted to VAC to provide vocational rehabilitation services and components for VAC's broader Rehabilitation Program; (h) what are the names of the businesses or individuals across the country who work with the consortium to deliver vocational rehabilitation services to veterans by province and territory; (i) what is the amount of annual funding provided by VAC to the subcontracted consortium to provide vocational rehabilitation services to CF veterans from 2006 to 2011 inclusively; (j) what are the details of how frequently business plans, operating budgets, capital budgets and performance reports are submitted by the consortium to VAC or the Minister; (k) how often does VAC conduct an assurance audit of the vocational rehabilitation services provided by the consortium; (l) when was the last time the government conducted an assurance audit of the vocational rehabilitation services; and (m) when does VAC next plan to conduct an assurance audit of the vocational rehabilitation services provided by the consortium?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 202—**Mr. Peter Stoffer:**

With respect to the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) administered by Veterans Affairs Canada: (a) what is the maximum annual monetary limit that eligible veterans can receive for the following services under the VIP and what is the breakdown of services received by veterans in the following categories from 2006-2011 inclusively for (i) home care services, (ii) grounds maintenance services, (iii) home adaptations, (iv) housekeeping services, (v) social transportation for eligible veterans; (b) how many veterans received VIP services from 2006 to 2011; (c) how many widows of veterans received VIP or the VIP extension from 2006 to 2011 inclusively; (d) has VAC considered extending VIP to all veterans who have a demonstrated health need; (e) has VAC considered extending VIP eligibility to all veterans widows or widowers who have a demonstrated health need; (f) has VAC considered extending VIP eligibility to all Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) veterans' and their widows; (g) what are the estimated costs of providing VIP services to RCMP veterans; and (h) what are the estimated costs of providing VIP services to all veterans' widows or widowers?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 204—**Mr. Marc Garneau:**

With regard to the training of Canadian military personnel by the U.S. company Xe Services, formerly known as Blackwater: (a) what is the total value of the contracts awarded to this company by the government in 2011; (b) how many Canadian Land Forces soldiers have been trained by the company since 2005; (c) what type of training did these soldiers receive; (d) how many members of the Special Operations Forces have been trained by this company since 2005; (e) what type of training did the members of the Special Operations Forces receive; and (f) how many contracts were awarded to this company in 2011 and what percentage of these contracts were awarded without a competitive bid process?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 206—**Mr. Romeo Saganash:**

With regard to government funding in Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou since fiscal year 2004-2005, up to and including the current fiscal year: (a) what is the total amount of funding broken down by (i) department, (ii) agency, (iii) all other government institutions, (iv) program; and (b) how many jobs have been created as a direct result of this government funding, broken down by (i) full-time jobs, (ii) part-time jobs?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 207—Mr. Sean Casey:**

With respect to additional fees or expenses of Deputy Ministers (DM) of government departments, what is the amount of all additional fees or expenses paid on behalf of DMs or for which DMs are reimbursed, including but not limited to (i) memberships or membership discounts for professional associations or other organizations (e.g., bar associations), (ii) club memberships or membership discounts for fitness clubs, golf clubs, social clubs (e.g., The Rideau Club), (iii) season tickets to cultural or sporting events, (iv) access to private health clinics or medical services outside those provided by provincial healthcare systems or by the employer's group insured benefit plans, (v) professional advisory services for personal matters, such as financial, tax or estate planning, broken down both by individual and by department?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 211—Ms. Judy Foote:**

With regard to search and rescue response times: (a) what new steps is the government taking to improve search and rescue response times; (b) what new monies are being allocated to improve search and rescue response times; (c) what is the rationale for the separate estimated response times in the day and in the evening, what was the rationale for choosing these times, and what research was done to determine the rationale; and (d) have the separate estimated response times in the day and evening been evaluated and what were the recommendations?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 213—Mr. Raymond Côté:**

With regard to the Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP): (a) what is the total amount borrowed from the program for each fiscal year since it was created; (b) how many loans over \$250 million dollars were issued; (c) which enterprises or individuals received loans over \$250 million dollars; (d) how many loans between \$25 million to \$250 million dollars were issued; (e) which enterprises or individuals received loans between \$25 million to \$250 million dollars; (f) which enterprises or individuals received loans less than \$25 million dollars; (g) what sum from the whole of BCAP's assets was given out as (i) loans, (ii) grants, (iii) subsidies; (h) what was the form (checks, bank loans, business loans, credit cards, cash) of the BCAP's loans, grants, and subsidies; (i) what were the conditions of acceptance to receive the BCAP program's support; (j) who was deciding on rejecting or accepting businesses into BCAP's loan program; (k) what were the eligibility criteria of BCAP's measures for businesses; (l) was there an evaluation grid of criteria needed for a business or individual to have access to BCAP's helping measures, and, if yes, who was the person or group of persons responsible for taking decisions concerning helping or not helping a business; (m) what is the total number of businesses that were directly helped by the BCAP program; (n) what was the composition of the oversight group managing the BCAP program; (o) were there any private companies involved in the acceptance or rejection process of the BCAP program, and, if yes, what were the names of the individuals that were involved and what were their roles within the BCAP program administration; (p) were there any conditions to receive financing from BCAP program; (q) what was the percentage and sum within the amount of BCAP resources allocated to small businesses (under 100 employees); (r) what was the percentage and sum within the amount of BCAP resources allocated to small businesses (under 500,000\$ in revenue); (s) what was the percentage and sum within the amount of BCAP resources allocated to small businesses (under 500,000\$ in revenue and under 100 employees); and (t) was anyone from the private sector consulted to allocate the resources of the BCAP and, if yes, what were their names and what were their roles in the process?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 214—Ms. Libby Davies:**

With regard to the impacts of oil sands development on the health of downstream surrounding First Nations and Métis communities in Fort McKay, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McMurray, Fort Resolution, Fort Fitzgerald, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson and Fort Good Hope: (a) what analysis has Health Canada conducted concerning what would have been, had there been no development of oil sand projects, the expected rates over the past decade in surrounding communities of (i) all forms of cancer, (ii) biliary tract cancer, including cholangiocarcinoma, (iii) colon cancer, (iv) lung cancer, (v) soft tissue sarcoma, (vi) leukemia, (vii) lymphomas; (b) what studies has Health Canada completed concerning the observed rates over the past decade in surrounding communities of (i) all forms of cancer, (ii) biliary tract cancer, including cholangiocarcinoma, (iii) colon cancer, (iv) lung cancer, (v) soft tissue sarcoma, (vi) leukemia, (vii) lymphomas; (c) what studies has Health Canada completed

concerning whether over the past decade oil sands development has been exposing, via the land, water, air or wildlife, surrounding communities to toxic substances, including (i) lead, (ii) mercury, (iii) volatile components of petroleum, (iv) polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, (v) dioxin-like compounds, (vi) arsenic; (d) what analysis has Health Canada conducted concerning the underlying cause, such as increased detection, chance, lifestyle risk factors or exposure to environmental contaminants, of any discrepancy between the expected and observed rates over the past decade in surrounding communities of (i) all forms of cancer, (ii) biliary tract cancer, including cholangiocarcinoma, (iii) colon cancer, (iv) lung cancer, (v) soft tissue sarcoma, (vi) leukemia, (vii) lymphomas; (e) does Health Canada plan to work with other federal departments, the Government of Alberta, and surrounding First Nations and Métis communities to complete a comprehensive study on the health impacts of oil sands development; (f) does Health Canada plan to work with other federal departments, the Government of Alberta, and surrounding First Nations and Métis communities to identify and implement measures aimed at reducing any health impacts that are discovered in such a study; (g) what is Health Canada's policy on its responsibility under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act with regard to the health impacts of oil sands development on surrounding communities; and (h) what is the government's policy on whether naphthenic acids, a toxic by-product of oil sands production found in tailings, should be added to the National Pollutant Release Inventory under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 216—Hon. Mauril Bélanger:**

With regard to refugee claims from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, how many claims were made in (i) 2006, (ii) 2007, (iii) 2008, (iv) 2009, (v) 2010?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 217—Mr. Fin Donnelly:**

With respect to budget cuts at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): (a) which specific directorates and programs are affected and what was the process followed to determine whether or not to make cuts to a specific directorate and program; (b) what, if any, DFO scientists were consulted regarding the considered cuts; (c) what scientists outside of DFO were consulted; (d) for each directorate and program specified in (a), what is the number of current full-time, part-time and contract scientific positions; (e) for each directorate and program specified in (a), what is the number of full-time, part-time and contract scientists who have been given "workforce adjustment" letters; (f) for each directorate and program specified in (a), what is the number of full-time, part-time and contract scientists who are going to be moved out of their current "job functions"; (g) what are all programs run by a single scientist who has been given a "workforce adjustment" letter, and, for each program identified, what, if any, steps have been taken to make sure that the program continues; (h) what process will be followed to place scientists in appropriate research areas; and (i) has the government taken steps to limit the effects of the cuts on scientists whose high level of specialization in a particular field may make finding an appropriate replacement position impossible?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 218—Hon. John McKay:**

With respect to Canada's fleet of submarines, which is comprised of HMCS Victoria, HMCS Windsor, HMCS Chicoutimi, and HMCS Corner Brook: (a) what is the total cost, broken down by vessel, and itemized by categories including maintenance, repairs, staffing, and all others relevant categories for (i) the most recent fiscal year, (ii) since their acquisition; (b) what is the estimated cost that the government anticipates to spend before the fleet is active again, broken down by vessel; (c) what are the dates that the government anticipates each vessel will return to service; and (d) which companies have been contracted to perform work on the vessels in order to return the fleet to operation?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 220—Mr. Don Davies:**

With respect to Temporary Resident Visas (TRVs): (a) how many individuals per year, over the last ten years, who were issued a TRV have gone on to make a refugee claim; (b) over the last ten years, (i) what have been the ten most common countries of origin of the refugee claimants in (a), (ii) how many refugee claimants have come from each of the ten countries per year; (c) of the refugee claimants mentioned in (a), what is the breakdown in terms of (i) gender, (ii) age; (d) what is the total number of TRVs issued per year over the last ten years; and (e) does the Department of Citizenship and Immigration know how many TRV holders have stayed in Canada beyond the expiry date of their visas in the last ten years and, if so, how many have done so?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 222—Mr. Don Davies:**

With respect to five-year multiple-entry visas: (a) how many visas of this type have been issued in total per year over the last ten years; (b) what is the breakdown in terms of (i) gender, (ii) age; (c) how many have been issued per year to individuals who have a pending application for permanent residence, and what is the breakdown in terms of permanent residency class applied for; and (d) over the last ten years, (i) what have been the ten most common countries of origin for individuals who have received multiple-entry visas, (ii) how many applicants have come from each of the ten countries per year?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 223—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With respect to Lyme disease-carrying ticks and Lyme disease in Canada: (a) what percentage of Lyme disease cases are thought to be reported, (i) what percentage of people who receive treatment for Lyme disease develop post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome, (ii) what percentage of people with untreated Lyme disease infections experience intermittent bouts of arthritis, (iii) what percentage of untreated Lyme disease patients are at risk of developing chronic neurological complaints months to years after infection; (b) based on all epidemiological data collected since Lyme disease became a nationally-reportable disease, what is the most recent data available about Lyme disease cases, broken down (i) by province, (ii) by month, (iii) by symptom, (iv) incidence by age and sex; (c) how does the government define a “Lyme-endemic area”, (i) in what specific areas of Canada are ticks endemic and highly endemic, (ii) what areas of Canada have the highest numbers of human infections; (d) what is Lyme disease’s (i) ranking among vector-borne diseases in Canada, (ii) ranking among nationally notifiable diseases; (e) is it possible to have more than one tick-borne infection, and, if so, (i) are possible co-infections being investigated and tracked, (ii) does one’s chance of having multiple tick-borne infections depend on geographic location, and, if so, what areas are particularly at risk, (iii) what is the rate of co-infection by province; (f) broken down by province, over the last 20 years, how has a warming climate impacted Lyme disease, in particular, (i) how has warming impacted tick distribution by province, (ii) how has warming impacted the distribution of Lyme disease by province; (g) what does the government project will be the effect of climate change on (i) the geographical range of ticks in 2020 and 2050, (ii) the distribution of ticks across Canada, (iii) human Lyme disease infections, (iv) the distribution of Lyme disease infections in Canada; (h) how has municipal development changed in tick-endemic areas throughout Canada over the last 20 years, (i) how have these changes brought humans in contact with ticks, (ii) how has development impacted the distribution of the disease, (iii) what are the government’s projections concerning how development will change over the next 40 years, (iv) what are the government’s projections concerning how development will impact the spread of Lyme disease over the next 40 years; (i) what are Health Canada’s recommended treatment guidelines for Lyme disease, and what was the process used to develop them; (j) what tests does Health Canada recommend for diagnosing cases of Lyme disease, (i) what is the percentage accuracy of the recommended tests at each stage of disease, namely, when a patient has an erythema migrans rash, when a patient is in the early disseminated stage (days to weeks post-tick bite), and when a person is in the late disseminated stage (months to years post-tick bite), (ii) what tests for diagnosing Lyme disease are available and recommended in Canada during each of the above-mentioned stages of the disease, (iii) can patients be treated based solely on their symptoms or must they have had positive test results; (k) is the government aware of any organization that recommends physicians who are familiar with diagnosing and treating Lyme disease, and, if so, where can this information be accessed; (l) what percentage of patients with Lyme disease respond well to antibiotics, (i) what percentage of patients with Lyme disease experience fatigue, muscle aches, sleep disturbance, or difficulty thinking even after completing a recommended course of antibiotic treatment, (ii) what research has been undertaken

regarding the benefits and risks of a longer course of antibiotics, (iii) what are Health Canada’s recommendations concerning a longer course of antibiotics, (iv) what follow-up has Health Canada undertaken to ensure that patients have access to a longer course of antibiotic treatment if required; (m) what, if any, recommendations does Health Canada make concerning those who suffer post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome; (n) what, if any, resources does Health Canada provide to clinicians regarding diagnosis, treatment, and testing; (o) what, if any, resources does Health Canada provide to clinicians for continuing medical education on the topic of Lyme disease; (p) what, if any, case definition and report forms does Health Canada make available concerning Lyme disease, and when were each of these forms last updated by Health Canada; (q) what specific actions are Health Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research undertaking regarding prevention of Lyme disease, including, but not limited to, (i) programs of research, (ii) programs of service, (iii) education programs for the public and healthcare providers; (r) what resources have been provided to each initiative identified in response to (q); (s) what, if anything, is Health Canada doing with national surveillance data regarding Lyme disease, in particular, (i) what is it doing to maintain such data, (ii) what is it doing to analyze such data, (iii) what resources has it allocated to such activities; (t) in what, if any, epidemiologic investigations is the government currently involved, in any capacity, including that of funding, (i) what resources is the government providing for any such study; (u) what, if any, diagnostic and reference laboratory services does the government provide in relation to Lyme disease, (i) what financial resources are provided for any such services; (v) what, if any, steps is Health Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Research taking to develop and test strategies for the control and prevention of Lyme disease in humans; and (w) what, if any, information does Health Canada provide to pregnant mothers about Lyme disease?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 224—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With respect to development of the oil sands, and its impacts on Aboriginal communities: (a) what are all the studies, along with their dates and results, undertaken by the government concerning the (i) possible impacts of the oil sands industry on land, water, and wildlife, (ii) potential impacts on Aboriginal livelihoods, inherent and treaty rights, and constitutional rights; (b) which government accommodation and consultation policies regarding the oil sands have been designed in partnership with Aboriginal peoples to ensure that free, prior and informed consent is obtained, and how does the government ensure that consultation policies are (i) designed in partnership with Aboriginal peoples, (ii) consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; (c) what are all consultations, including the dates of the consultations and those present, undertaken by the government with Aboriginal peoples, where there was consideration given to oil sands-related activities that might impact Section 35 rights, and what were the results or conclusions of these consultations; (d) does the government ensure that consultation with Aboriginal peoples occurs early in the decision-making process as related to the development of the oil sands and, if so, how does it do this; (e) what are all consultations with Aboriginal peoples which occurred early in the decision-making process as related to the development of the oil sands, and for each such consultation, how does it meet the government’s criteria for “early consultation”; (f) what are all legal challenges that have been undertaken or are being undertaken by First Nations communities against the government as related to the oil sands, and what is the stated reason for each challenge; (g) what are the studies, along with their dates and results, undertaken by the government concerning the possible impacts of legal challenges by First Nations communities on the oil sands industry; (h) which, if any, First Nations communities have asked for a full public inquiry into the impact of oil sands development and what are (i) the reasons provided for each such request, (ii) the projected cost of such an inquiry, (iii) the steps taken by the government to address each identified concern as outlined in (h)(i); (i) does the federal government plan to ensure that development in the oil sands region is consistent with the constitutionally-protected rights of Aboriginal peoples and the internationally-accepted doctrine of free, prior, and informed consent, and (i) other than actions referenced in the responses to parts (a) through (h), what federal decisions have been taken and what federal policies or programs have been developed taking into account Aboriginal peoples’ constitutionally-protected rights; and (j) what, if any, studies has the government funded to ensure that Aboriginal communities impacted or potentially impacted by the oil sands have the resources to direct their own baseline health studies and environmental monitoring programs?

*Routine Proceedings*

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 225—Ms. Manon Perreault:**

With respect to the Enabling Accessibility Fund: (a) how many applications were successful and received funding under this program, and how many applications were rejected through calls for proposals, since the start of the program; (b) with respect to successful applications, what was the location and value of each project, broken down by province and federal electoral district, through calls for proposals since the start of the program; (c) what is the total cost of administering the program thus far for each year since the start of the program; (d) how much funding is left; (e) how many major projects under this program will go to or went to expanding existing centres; (f) what is the value of the successful major projects applications that went to (i) the construction of new centres, (ii) the expanding of existing centres; (g) how many of the successful Mid-Sized Projects Enabling Accessibility Fund applications went to (i) renovating buildings, (ii) modifying vehicles, (iii) making information and communications more accessible; (h) what is the value of the successful Small Projects Enabling Accessibility Fund applications that went to (i) renovating buildings, (ii) modifying vehicles, (iii) making information and communications more accessible; (i) what is the reason most often given for rejecting an application; (j) what are the reasons given for rejecting an application and what is the frequency of each reason; (k) will the program be renewed next year; and (l) when will the next call for proposals be issued?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 226—Hon. Mark Eyking:**

With regard to the Canadian International Development Agency's spending on the delivery of vaccines and immunizations through Canada's official development assistance: (a) what are Canada's current and future financial commitments on vaccines and immunizations from all branches, projects and programs within CIDA, including bilateral, multilateral, and geographic/partnership branch, broken down by individual commitment; (b) what specific current or future immunizations or vaccines programs or projects, broken down by recipient country and CIDA stream of funding with associated funding amounts, are related to the roll-out of the Muskoka Initiative; and (c) when has the monitoring and evaluation of Canada's immunizations and vaccines programs as promised by the Prime Minister during the 2010 Muskoka G8 taken place or when will it take place and will it be under the auspices of the United Nations Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 227—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:**

With respect to the last hiring process that took place for the position of Director General, Regional Operations for Prince Edward Island (PEI) (Mr. Kevin MacAdam) at the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA): (a) when was the job position posted; (b) where was the position posted (i.e., website, newspapers, etc.); (c) for how long was the position posted in each medium; (d) was it an external or internal posting; (e) what information appeared in each posting medium; (f) who specifically developed and approved the job posting qualifications; (g) was this a newly created position, and, if not, what information appeared on the posting for the previous competition for the position (i.e., that of Mr. MacAdam's predecessor); (h) what was the job description for this position prior to the last hiring process; (i) what is the current job description, if it is different from the description in (h); (j) what is the pay scale for this position; (k) has the pay scale for this position changed with the new hiring of Mr. MacAdam; (l) what were the French-language requirements (i.e., levels of proficiency A, B, or C) for this job when it was originally posted; (m) have the French-language requirements (i.e., levels of proficiency A, B, or C) changed with the latest hiring process for this position; (n) is there a Director General, Regional Operations position in ACOA for each of the other three Atlantic provinces (i.e., New Brunswick (NB), Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), and Nova Scotia (NS)), and, if yes, what is, for each position, (i) the pay scale, (ii) the job description, (iii) the French-language requirements (i.e., levels of proficiency A, B, or C); (o) are there any positions with ACOA for which bilingualism is a requirement to be hired, and, if so, what are they; (p) in the last five years, in how many cases and for which positions have newly hired ACOA employees started their employment by being required to receive full-time French training; (q) does ACOA utilize any language training facilities in PEI, NL, NB or NS for employee French-language training, and, if so, which ones; (r) how many ACOA employees have received second-language training in each of the last five years; (s) what was the average length of second-language training over last five years; (t) what was the average cost for second-language training per employee in 2010-2011; (u) what is the expected budgeted cost

of second-language training for the current Director General, Regional Operations for PEI (Mr. Kevin MacAdam), broken down by specific cost categories (e.g., tuition, travel, accommodations, meals, books, incidentals, etc.); (v) what is the duration of French-language training that Mr. MacAdam is required to take, broken down by (i) months, (ii) hours; (w) what levels of French-language proficiency (A, B, or C) must Mr. MacAdam achieve; (x) is Mr. MacAdam receiving his full salary during his French-language training, and, if not, how much is he being paid during this period; and (y) what is ACOA's policy on the second-language training of its employees in terms of (i) effects on trainees' salaries, (ii) special compensation or benefits available to trainees during second language training, (iii) requirements to perform work duties, if any, during second-language training?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 228—Mr. Sean Casey:**

With respect to the new federal regulations on water treatment systems, issued by Environment Canada, to be implemented in November 2011: (a) what is the estimated cost, separately, for each municipality and province affected by the need to upgrade infrastructure to meet the new requirements; and (b) how much funding has been committed by the federal government to help contribute to the upgrades in the jurisdictions of (i) St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, (ii) Halifax, Nova Scotia, (iii) Montreal, Québec, (iv) Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, (v) Victoria, British Columbia, (vi) Vancouver, British Columbia, (vii) Sydney, Nova Scotia, (viii) Saint John, New Brunswick, (ix) Thunder Bay, Ontario, (x) Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador, (xi) Ottawa, Ontario?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 229—Mr. Sean Casey:**

With respect to the new federal regulations on tolerance of fecal matter in areas where shellfish are, as issued by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: (a) what is the estimated cost, separately, for each municipality and province affected by the need to upgrade infrastructure to address the new requirements; (b) how much funding has been committed by the federal government to help contribute to the upgrades in the jurisdictions of (i) St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, (ii) Halifax, Nova Scotia, (iii) Montreal, Québec, (iv) Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, (v) Victoria, British Columbia, (vi) Vancouver, British Columbia, (vii) Sydney, Nova Scotia, (viii) Saint John, New Brunswick, (ix) Thunder Bay, Ontario, (x) Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador, (xi) Ottawa, Ontario; (c) how many times since the new federal regulations took effect have the fishing areas in the above-mentioned jurisdictions been shut down due to fecal matter contamination exceeding the acceptable limits; and (d) what is the estimated economic impact on local fishers of the new federal regulations in the jurisdictions of (i) St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, (ii) Halifax, Nova Scotia, (iii) Montreal, Québec, (iv) Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, (v) Victoria, British Columbia, (vi) Vancouver, British Columbia, (vii) Sydney, Nova Scotia, (viii) Saint John, New Brunswick, (ix) Thunder Bay, Ontario, (x) Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador, (xi) Ottawa, Ontario?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 230—Ms. Denise Savoie:**

With regard to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the government's role in monitoring and regulating arms exports: (a) on what date will the government table in Parliament or otherwise release a report on the export of military goods from Canada for 2010; (b) in its next report, will the government provide a level of detail similar to that provided in the Annual Report of 2002 and, in particular, will it provide information similar in nature to that contained in the 2002 report's "Table 3: Exports of Military Goods by Destination Country and Component Category"; (c) what is the value and type of all exports of weapons systems and munitions from 2003-2010, broken down by year, for each recipient state; (d) what is the value and type of all exports of military support systems from 2003-2010, broken down by year, for each recipient state; (e) what is the value and type of all exports of military parts from 2003-2010, broken down by year, for each recipient state; (f) what is the value and type of all exports of parts not officially designated as "military parts" that were destined for a known military purpose from 2003-2010, broken down by year, for each recipient state; (g) what is the value of export permits for Export Control List (ECL) Group 2 items authorized from 2003-2010, broken down by year, for each recipient state; (h) what is the value of export permits for ECL Group 2 items denied from 2003-2010, broken down by year, for each recipient state; (i) what is the value of export permits authorized and exports made for prohibited firearms for the United States from 2003-2010, broken down by year; (j) what is the value of export permits authorized and exports made for ECL Group 1 items from 2003-2010, broken down by year, for each recipient state; (k) what is the government's position toward the negotiation of an international Arms Trade Treaty that would establish common standards for the national authorization of conventional weapons transfers; (l) how does the government define "sporting and hunting firearms" in both domestic and international law as it would apply in the Arms Trade Treaty; (m) will Canada withdraw its proposed exemption to exclude sporting and hunting firearms for recreational use from the Arms Trade Treaty; (n) what is the relationship between the Canadian Sports Shooters Association and the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs; (o) how many meetings have been held between Steve Torino and Minister John Baird or Minister Baird's staff; (p) how many meetings were held between DFAIT officials and the Canadian Sports Shooters Association prior to the last round of negotiations for the Arms Trade Treaty; (q) on what date did DFAIT change its position on the Arms Trade Treaty with respect to "sporting and hunting firearms"; (r) what is the government's position on the Global Investor Statement on the Arms Trade Treaty; (s) what is the government's official position on the Organization of American States Firearms Convention (CIFTA); and (t) will the government ratify the OAS Firearms Convention?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 231—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:**

With regard to the Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act (Statutes of Canada 2010, Chapter 18) (Bill C-3, 40th Parliament, Third Session): (a) how many individuals have applied for Indian Status specifically as a result of the passage of Bill C-3, and how many of these applicants have been deemed (i) eligible for registration, (ii) ineligible for registration, (iii) are awaiting a ruling by the Indian Registrar as to their eligibility for Indian status under the legislation; (b) how many additional employees have been hired by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to expedite the processing of applications made as a result of the passage of Bill C-3; (c) what has been the average time required to complete the processing of applications made as a result of the passage of Bill C-3; (d) how does the number of applications received compare to the department's estimate that 45,000 individuals would be added to the Indian Register as a result of Bill C-3; (e) since January 31, 2011, has the department revised or considered revising its estimates about the number of Bill C-3 registrants; (f) what is the breakdown by First Nation of newly eligible Bill C-3 registrants; (g) what were the conclusions and recommendations of the Internal Financial Impacts Working Group established in March 2010 to determine the cost implications of adding approximately 45,000 individuals to the Indian Register; (h) what is the department's response to the report of the Internal Financial Impacts Working Group; and (i) has the department committed, or does it plan to commit, any additional resources to program spending or contributions and grants to First Nation governments due to the addition of new individuals to the Indian Register?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 234—Mr. Philip Toone:**

With regard to federal involvement in drug and alcohol treatment programs for First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada for each of the last ten years: (a) how many patients were referred to the following types of treatment centres, by province and by

year, (i) outpatient treatment centres, (ii) inpatient treatment centres, (iii) outpatient/inpatient treatment centres, (iv) family treatment centres, (v) solvent abuse treatment centres, (vi) treatment centres serving youth; (b) what was the total cost to the government for these services by (i) year, (ii) province; (c) what government organizations have funded these services by (i) year, (ii) province; and (d) what government organizations have referred clients or patients to these services by (i) year, (ii) province?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 235—Ms. Joyce Murray:**

With respect to Western Economic Diversification (WED) Canada, for fiscal years 2005-2006 to 2010-2011 (inclusive), what are the total authorities used on the following programs and activities, including authorities granted by statutes other than Appropriation Acts, broken down by individual budget categories or subcategories: (a) community economic development, (i) initiatives to facilitate economic recovery from depressed economic circumstances, (ii) initiatives designed to foster community growth and economic development, (iii) investments in community infrastructure; (b) innovation, (i) knowledge infrastructure, (ii) basic and applied research and development, (iii) personnel, (iv) investments to improve access to adequate patient financing, (v) technology commercialization facilities, (vi) support systems and mechanisms to link those elements to each other; (c) business development, (i) initiatives to enhance business productivity and competitiveness, (ii) initiatives to support trade and investment attraction and penetration of western Canadian technologies, services and value-added products into international markets, (iii) initiatives in priority sectors to introduce new products, technologies, or innovations to existing production and processes, (iv) programs and services designed to improve access to risk capital and business services for entrepreneurs and small businesses; (d) policy, advocacy, and coordination, (i) initiatives to advocate for Western Canada in national policy discussions, (ii) leading federal and intergovernmental collaboration, (iii) research and analysis to inform policy and program decisions; (e) internal services, (i) management and oversight services, (ii) communications services, (iii) legal services, (iv) human resources management services, (v) financial management services, (vi) information management services, (vii) information technology services, (viii) real property services, (ix) materiel services, (x) acquisition services, (xi) travel and other administrative services; and (f) any other general categories or sub-categories of the above used in WED's own management and accountability of its programs?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 237—Ms. Joyce Murray:**

With respect to Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative, what are the total authorities used in any and all federal programs and activities for fiscal years 2005-2006 to 2010-2011 (inclusive), including authorities granted by statutes other than Appropriation Acts and any partner or other government contributions in support of the initiative, broken down by specific initiative, including (i) the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat, (ii) the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Transportation Infrastructure Fund, (iii) the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative Research Consortium, (iv) Canadian Tourism Commission marketing and sales programs focused in the Asia-Pacific, (v) any other government programs or activities that are part of this initiative?

(Return tabled)



*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 238—Mr. David Tilson:**

With regard to The Highland Companies' proposed limestone quarry to be located in Melancthon Township, Dufferin County, Ontario: (a) with which departments has the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency communicated in any way concerning a possible environmental assessment on this proposed project and what were the specific subjects of these communications; (b) what was the specific nature of any communication between the Minister of the Environment or his office and other federal departments or agencies, including the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, on this matter; (c) what specific information does the government currently possess that contributes to its determination that a federal environmental assessment is not required; (d) what communication has the federal government or its agencies had with the Government of Ontario or its agencies on this matter; and (e) what communication has the government or its agencies had with the project proponent, its parent companies or its subsidiaries on this matter?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 239—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:**

With respect to Employment Insurance (EI) Processing Centres and EI Call Centres: (a) what was the statistical median and mode for EI application processing times, nationally and broken down by province, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (b) what is the total number and percentage of EI claim applications, nationally and broken down by province, that did not get paid within 28 days, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (c) for the claim applications that take longer than 28 days to process, what is the statistical average, median and mode number of days, nationally and broken down by province, that it takes for payment to occur, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (d) what was the percentage of automation achieved in EI processing, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (e) what was the number of EI processing staff, nationally and broken down by province, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (f) what is the bonus or incentive structure concerning EI application processing times achieved, for (i) workers, (ii) management; (g) for EI application claims that take longer than 28 days to process, is there a bonus or incentives structure to encourage that the application be processed as quickly as possible, for (i) workers, (ii) management; (h) what are the service standard policies for claims that take longer than 28 days to process; (i) have the service level standards for EI claims processing changed in the last six years, and, if so, (i) when, (ii) why; (j) what was the average EI processing worker salary, nationally and broken down by province, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (k) what was the total EI processing worker salary cost, nationally and broken down by province, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (l) what was the total number of EI Call Centre staff, nationally and in each province, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (m) have the service level standards for EI Call Centre call backs changed in the last six years, and, if so, (i) when, (ii) why; (n) why did the National Service Level for Access II calls answered within 180 seconds change from 95% to 80% in 2008 at EI Call Centres; (o) what is the EI Call Centre agent Occupancy measure and what is the government's rationale for this measure; (p) what has been the EI Call Centre agent Occupancy target and result, nationally and broken down by province, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (q) what was the target for EI Call Centre High Volume Targets for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (r) what was the total cost associated with training new EI Call Centre workers, broken down by province, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (s) what is the average speed of answer for EI Call Centre calls, broken down by EI Call Centre, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; and (t) what is the abandonment rate for calls at EI Call Centres, nationally and broken down by EI Call Centre, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 241—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:**

With respect to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS) call centres: (a) for CPP/OAS Call Centre Access I calls, what is (i) the service level standard, (ii) the corresponding results achieved, broken down by CPP/OAS call centre, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-

2011, and 2011 to date; (b) for CPP/OAS Call Centre Access II calls, what is (i) the service level standard, (ii) the corresponding results achieved, broken down by CPP/OAS call centre, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (c) if the National Service Level standard for Access II calls at CPP/OAS call centres changed in the last six years, what was the reasoning for the change; (d) what has been the CPP/OAS Call Centre agent Occupancy target and result, broken down by CPP/OAS call centre, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (e) for CPP/OAS Call Centre High Volume Messages (i) what is the service level standard, (ii) what are the corresponding results achieved, broken down by CPP/OAS call centre, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (f) what was (i) the total number of calls received by CPP/OAS call centres, (ii) the total number of CPP/OAS Call Centre Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Busy calls, broken down by CPP/OAS call centre, for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (g) have the service level standards for CPP/OAS call centre call-backs changed in the last six years, and, if so, (i) when, (ii) why; (h) what was the total number of CPP/OAS call centre staff, nationally and in each province, in the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; (i) what was the staff turnover at CPP/OAS call centres, broken down by province, in the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date; and (j) what was the total cost associated with training new CPP/OAS call centre workers, broken down by province, in the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011 to date?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 242—Mr. François Lapointe:**

What is the total amount of government funding since fiscal year 2008-2009, by year, up to and including the current fiscal year, allocated within the constituency of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, identifying each department or agency, initiative and amount?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 243—Hon. Irwin Cotler:**

With respect to the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled "Ahmadinejad's Iran: A Threat to Peace, Human Rights and International Law" (Sessional Paper No. 8510-403-162), presented to the House of Commons on December 9, 2010 (40th Parliament, Third Session): (a) does the government plan to adopt the 24 recommendations outlined in this report; and (b) in particular, how does the government plan to respond to the recommendations made in the report concerning (i) terrorism, as described in Recommendation 13 of the report, (ii) the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, as described in Recommendation 17 of the report, (iii) the Iranian incitement to genocide, as described in Recommendations 20 and 21 of the report, (iv) human rights violations, as described in Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 10 of the report?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 244—Hon. Irwin Cotler:**

With regard to Bill C-10, An Act to enact the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other Acts: (a) what is the total projected cost of all measures contained in Bill C-10; (b) how long will it take to fully implement all proposed changes to the criminal justice system and its associated institutions, including, but not limited to, penal, policing and judiciary institutions; (c) how will the total funding be divided annually to meet the timeframe offered in response to (b) with regard to changes to the criminal justice system and its associated institutions; (d) what is the projected distribution of the total projected cost of Bill C-10 across each of its nine subsections; (e) what federal or provincial programs currently in effect in relation to the criminal justice system will be discontinued to support Bill C-10, and what federal and provincial programs will lose funding to support Bill C-10; (f) how much funding will be lost by each of the programs identified in (e); (g) how will the total projected cost of Bill C-10, as well as the projected cost of each of the nine individual subsections, be divided between the federal government and each province or territory; (h) what methodologies were used to determine projections and estimates provided in response to (a) through (g); (i) what supporting documentation does the government plan to make public to validate the provided projections and estimates; and (j) will the documentation and methodology used to determine these estimates be made public, and, if not, will they be disclosed to the Parliamentary Budget Officer?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 250—Mr. François Choquette:**

What is the total amount of government funding, since fiscal year 2006-2007, up to and including the current fiscal year, allocated within the constituency of Drummond, specifying each (i) department or agency, (ii) initiative or program, (iii) year, (iv) amount?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 252—Mr. Tyrone Benskin:**

With regard to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and its current and former employment of Bruce Carson, Dimitri Soudas, Sandra Buckler, Guy Giorno, Nigel Wright, Ian Brodie, Ray Novak, Andrew McDougall, Kory Teneycke, Alykhan Velshi and Angelo Persichilli: (a) what were/are the employment agreements with each of these individuals in terms of (i) salary, (ii) vehicle allowance or provision of car and/or driver, (iii) expense account for food, drink, alcohol and hospitality, (iv) out-of-town accommodations for the individual; (b) in each of the years between 2000 and 2011, how much did each of these individuals expense for (i) food, (ii) travel, (iii) hotels, (iv) hospitality, (v) drink, (vi) vehicle use; (c) what were the itemized amounts and descriptions of each individual's individual expenses as identified in the answers to (b); and (d) if the PMO provides any of these individuals with a vehicle for his use, as identified in the answers to (a)(ii), broken down by individual, (i) what is the model and make of the car, (ii) how much does this benefit cost the PMO on an annual basis?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 256—Hon. Geoff Regan:**

What is the total amount of government funding since fiscal year 2004-2005, up to and including the current fiscal year, allocated within the constituency of Halifax West, identifying each department or agency, initiative and amount?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 257—Hon. Geoff Regan:**

With respect to Industry Canada's Community Access Program, which provides funding to communities across Canada with populations facing barriers to Internet use, and contributions under the Youth Employment Strategy for the Community Access Program: (a) for each year from 2005-2006 to the present, what is the total actual spending on the Community Access Program excluding the Youth Employment Strategy (i) nationally, (ii) broken down by province; (b) for each year from 2005-2006 to the present, what were the total estimates on the Community Access Program excluding the Youth Employment Strategy (i) nationally, (ii) broken down by province; (c) for each year from 2005-2006 to the present, what is the total actual spending on the Youth Employment Strategy directly related to the Community Access Program (i) nationally, (ii) broken down by province; (d) for each year from

2005-2006 to the present, what were the total estimates on the Youth Employment Strategy directly related to the Community Access Program (i) nationally, (ii) broken down by province; (e) for each year from 2005-2006 to the present, what was the total usage of the Community Access Program (i) by people-hours nationally, (ii) by people-hours broken down by province; and (f) what is the projected spending for the Community Access Program and the Youth Employment Strategy for the Community Access Program for the fiscal year 2012-2013, (i) nationally, (ii) broken down by province?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 260—Ms. Irene Mathysen:**

With regard to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada funding in the riding of London—Fanshawe for the last five fiscal years: (a) what is the total amount of spending by (i) year, (ii) program, (iii) local groups that received the funding; and (b) what is the amount of spending by each of the following programs, (i) Opportunities Fund (Regional)—Enhanced Employment Assistance Services, (ii) Opportunities Funds (Regional)—Wage Subsidy, (iii) Youth - Skills Link—Individual Work Experience, (iv) New Horizons for Seniors—Capital, (v) New Horizons for Seniors—Community Participation and Leadership (CPL), (vi) Opportunities Fund (Regional)—Enhanced Employment Assistance Services, (vii) Enabling Accessibility Fund, (viii) Youth—Canada Summer Jobs?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 261—Ms. Irene Mathysen:**

With regard to government funding in the riding of London—Fanshawe since fiscal year 2004-2005, up to and including the current fiscal year: (a) what is the total amount of funding broken down by (i) department, (ii) agency, (iii) all other government institutions, (iv) program; and (b) how many jobs have been created as a direct result of this government funding, broken down by (i) full-time jobs, (ii) part-time jobs?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 262—Ms. Irene Mathysen:**

With regard to the New Horizons program, since fiscal year 2004-2005, up to and including the current fiscal year: (a) what is the total amount of funding broken down by (i) the organization or program that received funding, (ii) the location of each organization or program that received funding; (b) how many applications for funding were received broken down by (i) the organization or program that applied for funding, (ii) the location of origin of each application; and (c) what criteria were used to determine which applicants received funding?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 263—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:**

With regard to the Atlantic Groundfish License Retirement Program (AGLRP): (a) what are the specific taxation details involved in this program that led to a federal court case; (b) what is the exact start date and end date of this program; (c) how much money did the government spend on the federal court case with 752 fishermen involved in this program; (d) did the Newfoundland and Labrador tax director provide the government with reasons for the decision to decline to review the case brought forward by these 752 fishermen, and, if so, what were the reasons; (e) how many licenses were bought out under the program in each of the years that it was in place; (f) how many fishermen were involved in the program in total and how many (i) were from each Department of Fisheries and Oceans fishery region, (ii) were from each province; (g) to date, identifying the years in which the requests for reassessment were made, how many of the fishermen have contacted the government asking for a reassessment of their file, (i) including the 752 fishermen involved in the court case, (ii) excluding the 752 fishermen involved in the court case; (h) what are the government's reasons for any denials of reassessment; (i) does the government plan to settle with the 752 fishermen who were involved in the federal court case, and, if so, (i) what will each individual offer be, (ii) what will the total dollar figure of all offers be; (j) how much money was paid to approximately 150 fishermen by the Canada Revenue Agency in or around December 2003, specifying how much was paid (i) in total, (ii) to each individual; (k) what are the reasons that the Canada Revenue Agency reached a deal with fishermen in or around December 2003; (l) how much does the government plan to offer to the remaining fishermen who were involved in the program, but were not involved in the court case; (m) does the government have a policy concerning how it will reach settlements with every fisher who was involved in the AGLRP, whether or not they were involved in the federal court case, and, if so, what are the details of this policy; and (n) has the government conducted an analysis of the likelihood of its having to fight a court case involving fishermen who were involved in the program but not involved in the previous court case, and, if so, what are its conclusions?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 264—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With respect to the planning for and the execution of the joint meeting of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada (MSSC), on August 26, 2010: (a) what were the most recent statistics CIHR had regarding MS as of August 26, 2010, and had CIHR received, internally or externally, any request to update the figures beforehand; (b) what criteria were used to identify which international experts in chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI) should be invited to the August 26, 2010, meeting, and, (i) was Dr. Mark Haacke a candidate for invitation and, if so, why was he not invited, (ii) was Dr. Marion Simka a candidate for invitation and, if so, why was he not invited, (iii) was Dr. Paolo Zamboni a candidate for invitation, and, if so, why was he not invited, (iv) which invitees had expertise or experience administering CCSVI treatment, (v) why did the criteria not exclude from participation individuals who had publicly criticized the validity of CCSVI, (vi) what was the rationale for “[keeping] the international participation in focus” (Answer to Access to Information Request ATI 2010-006); (c) what CIHR experts were consulted regarding CCSVI/MS prior to the August 26, 2010, meeting, and, if any CIHR experts were consulted, what recommendations did they make, including any recommendations concerning large multi-centre clinical trials; (d) what briefings did the Minister of Health provide to members of the Conservative caucus regarding CCSVI or MS prior to the August 26, 2010, meeting, (i) what were the dates of any briefings, (ii) what information was provided; (e) did provincial governments express “mounting pressure” (ATI 2010-006) from the public regarding the need for clinical trials and treatment for CCSVI, and, if so, which provinces expressed any such pressure; (f) did any of the provinces and territories communicate an interest in partnering with the federal government on a “potential initiative” (ATI 2010-006), and, if so, what were the details of the “potential initiative” (ATI 2010-006); (g) by what date and by whom was CIHR made aware of the history of the theory of abnormal vasculature in MS dating back more than 100 years; (h) what was CIHR's rationale for focussing its literature review on CCSVI and for excluding from consideration literature on the theory of abnormal vasculature in MS and why did CIHR decide to have students work on this literature review; (i) what criteria did the CIHR use to determine which of the 19 studies identified through PubMed (July 2010) it would include in its review of existing literature and research; (j) on what date did the President of CIHR first state that he would be pleased to provide for a randomized control trial on CCSVI treatment for review at the next grant competition, and (i) did the President ever speak to the “F/P/T” (ATI 2010-006) regarding the need for randomized clinical trials; (k) what lobbyists and/or pharmaceutical companies asked for a meeting with the Minister of Health's office prior to August 26, 2010, to discuss a new oral MS drug and CCSVI treatment, and

(i) what lobbyists and/or companies were “well respected” (ATI 2010-006) and had “a solid reputation with the MSSC” (ATI 2010-006); (l) why did CIHR change its position in March 2011 regarding an MS registry, and how was this change possible, given CIHR's previous statements to Dr. Carolyn Bennett and Dr. Kirsty Duncan that the creation of such a registry “was outside” their “mandate” (ATI 2010-006); (m) did CIHR have money available for funding clinical trials related to CCSVI, (i) was CIHR “overcommitted” (ATI 2010-006), (ii) if so, by how much, (iii) could CIHR have found “some money” (ATI 2010-006), (iv) when could money have been available; (n) prior to the August 26, 2010, meeting, how many provinces and territories “expressed some level of support for a clinical trial” (ATI 2010-006); (o) concerning the e-mail exchange of August 24, 2011, contained in the response to ATI 2010-006, did the Minister of Health “have authority or [did] she need to go through cabinet” (ATI 2010-006); (p) were abnormal veins discussed in any of the August 26, 2010, presentations, and, if so, (i) which presenters covered this issue, (ii) what historical papers were referenced; (q) was iron accumulation in MS brains discussed in any of the August 26, 2010, presentations, and, if so, (i) which presenters covered the issue, (ii) what historical papers were referenced; (r) did any of the presentations explore a possible relationship between abnormal brain veins and tissue damage in MS, and, if so, (i) which presenters covered the issue, (ii) what historical papers were referenced; (s) what criteria were used or what process was followed to prepare the Summary Report of the August 26, 2010, meeting and, specifically, why was no reference made in the Summary Report to historical papers discussing abnormal vasculature and iron accumulation; and (t) does the Summary Report of the August 26, 2010, meeting disclose potential conflicts of interests of the attendees, and, if not, why was this information not included?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 266—Hon. John McKay:**

With regard to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada funding in the riding of Scarborough—Guildwood for the last five fiscal years: (a) what is the total amount of spending by (i) year, (ii) program; and (b) what is the amount of each spending item by (i) Technical Assistance and Foreign-Based Cooperative Activities (International Trade and Labour Program), (ii) Skills Link (Youth Employment Strategy), (iii) Consultation and Partnership-Building and Canadian-Based Cooperative Activities (International Trade and Labour Program), (iv) Canada Summer Jobs (Youth Employment Strategy), (v) Children and Families (Social Development Partnerships Program), (vi) Labour Market Development Agreements, (vii) Labour Market Agreements, (viii) Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities, (ix) Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities, (x) Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, (xi) Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment, (xii) Enabling Accessibility Fund, (xiii) Skills and Partnership Fund—Aboriginal, (xiv) Targeted Initiative for Older Workers, (xv) International Academic Mobility Initiative—Canada-European Union Program for Co-operation in Higher Education, Training and Youth, (xvi) International Academic Mobility Initiative—Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education, (xvii) Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative, (xviii) International Labour Institutions in which Canada Participates (International Trade and Labour Program), (xix) Labour Mobility, (xx) New Horizons for Seniors, (xxi) Career Focus (Youth Employment Strategy), (xxii) Fire Safety Organizations, (xxiii) Organizations that Write Occupational Health and Safety Standards, (xxiv) Social Development Partnerships Program—Disability, (xxv) Foreign Credential Recognition Program Loans (pilot project), (xxvi) Fire Prevention Canada, (xxvii) Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program, (xxviii) Canada-European Union Program for Co-operation in Higher Education, Training and Youth (International Academic Mobility Initiative), (xxix) Labour-Management Partnerships Program, (xxx) Social Development Partnerships Program—Children and Families, (xxxi) Social Development Partnerships Program—Disability, (xxxii) Foreign Credential Recognition Program, (xxxiii) International Trade and Labour Program—Technical Assistance and Foreign-Based Cooperative Activities, (xxxiv) International Trade and Labour Program—Consultation and Partnership-Building and Canadian-Based Cooperative Activities, (xxxv) International Trade and Labour Program - International Labour Institutions in which Canada Participates, (xxxvi) Sector Council Program, (xxxvii) Federal Public Sector Youth Internship Program (Youth Employment Strategy), (xxxviii) Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership Program, (xxxix) Employment Programs—Career Development Services Research, (xl) Career Development Services Research (Employment Programs), (xli) Occupational Health and Safety, (xlii) Youth Awareness, (xliii) Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy, (xliv) Homelessness Partnering Strategy, (xlv) Youth Employment Strategy—Skills Link, (xlvi) Youth Employment Strategy—Canada Summer Jobs, (xlvii) Youth Employment Strategy—Career Focus, (xlviii) Youth Employment Strategy—Federal Public Sector Youth Internship Program, (xlix) Apprenticeship Completion Grant, (l) Apprenticeship Incentive Grant, (li) Work-Sharing, (lii) Small Project Component (Enabling Accessibility Fund)?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 267—Mr. Frank Valeriote:**

With regard to the Community Adjustment Fund: (a) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of applications to the fund; (b) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of projects funded; (c) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the total funding under the program; (d) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, what has been the average time in days from (i) the date an application was received to the date the application received approval, (ii) the date an application was received to the date the contribution agreement was signed, (iii) the date the application received approval to the date of the public announcement of the project; (e) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of projects which required an extension past March 31, 2011; (f) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the amount spent on public announcements of projects; (g) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, how many times were government aircraft used to transport officials to announcements related to the fund; and (h) for each individual project sponsored under the fund to date, (i) what was the project's internal file number, (ii) what was the name of the project, (iii) on what date was the application received, (iv) on what date was the application approved, (v) on what date was the project announced publicly, (vi) on what date was the contribution agreement signed, (vii) what was the total federal funding received, (viii) what was the cost of any public announcement related to the project, (ix) did the government pay for any federal official to travel to each announcement in (viii) and, if so, what are the names of these officials and was a government-owned aircraft used to

transport them, (x) what was the address of the project, including postal code and federal constituency name, (xi) what was the political party affiliation of the Member of Parliament representing the riding on the date the project was announced?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 268—Mr. Frank Valeriote:**

With regard to the Agriculture Flexibility Program (Agricultural Flexibility Fund or AgriFlexibility): (a) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of applications to the fund; (b) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of projects funded; (c) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the total funding under the program; (d) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, what has been the average time in days from (i) the date an application was received to the date the application received approval, (ii) the date an application was received to the date the contribution agreement was signed, (iii) the date the application received approval to the date of the public announcement of the project; (e) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of projects which required an extension past March 31, 2011; (f) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the amount spent on public announcements of projects; (g) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, how many times were government aircraft used to transport officials to announcements related to the fund; and (h) for each individual project sponsored under the fund to date, (i) what was the project's internal file number, (ii) what was the name of the project, (iii) on what date was the application received, (iv) on what date was the application approved, (v) on what date was the project announced publicly, (vi) on what date was the contribution agreement signed, (vii) what was the total federal funding received, (viii) what was the cost of any public announcement related to the project, (ix) did the government pay for any federal official to travel to each announcement in (viii) and, if so, what are the names of these officials and was a government-owned aircraft used to transport them, (x) what was the address of the project, including postal code and federal constituency name, (xi) what was the political party affiliation of the Member of Parliament representing the riding on the date the project was announced?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 269—Hon. John McCallum:**

With regard to the government's ongoing strategic review, for each department implementing strategic review savings in fiscal year 2011-2012: (a) what is every program or activity that has been altered as a result of the strategic review and, for each change, (i) what is the change in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, (ii) what was the previous cost of the program or activity, (iii) what is the new cost of the program or activity; and (b) what is every program or activity that will be altered as a result of the strategic review and, for each change, (i) what is the projected change in the number of FTE employees, (ii) what is the current cost of the program or activity, (iii) what is the projected cost of the program or activity?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 270—Hon. John McCallum:**

With regard to the Green Infrastructure Fund (GIF): (a) what are all projects that have received funding from the GIF to date; (b) what are all projects that are to receive funding from the GIF in the future; and (c) what transfers of funds from the GIF to other government departments or programs have occurred and, for each transfer, (i) what was the date of the transfer, (ii) what was the amount of the transfer, (iii) what department or program received the transfer, (iv) what was the purpose of the transfer, (v) what was the reason for using the GIF funds, (vi) what projects received funding as a result of the transfer of the GIF money?

(Return tabled)

## Routine Proceedings

Question No. 271—**Hon. John McCallum:**

With regard to the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund: (a) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of applications to the fund; (b) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of projects funded; (c) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the total funding under the program; (d) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, what has been the average time in days from (i) the date an application was received to the date the application received approval, (ii) the date an application was received to the date the contribution agreement was signed, (iii) the date the application received approval to the date of the public announcement of the project; (e) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of projects which required an extension past March 31, 2011; (f) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the amount spent on public announcements of projects; (g) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, how many times were government aircraft used to transport officials to announcements related to the fund; and (h) for each individual project sponsored under the fund to date, (i) what was the project's internal file number, (ii) what was the name of the project, (iii) on what date was the application received, (iv) on what date was the application approved, (v) on what date was the project announced publicly, (vi) on what date was the contribution agreement signed, (vii) what was the total federal funding received, (viii) what was the cost of any public announcement related to the project, (ix) did the government pay for any federal official to travel to each announcement in (viii) and, if so, what are the names of these officials and was a government-owned aircraft used to transport them, (x) what was the address of the project, including postal code and federal constituency name, (xi) what was the political party affiliation of the Member of Parliament representing the riding on the date the project was announced?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 272—**Hon. John McCallum:**

With regard to the Recreational Infrastructure Canada Fund: (a) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of applications to the fund; (b) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of projects funded; (c) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the total funding under the program; (d) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, what has been the average time in days from (i) the date an application was received to the date the application received approval, (ii) the date an application was received to the date the contribution agreement was signed, (iii) the date the application received approval to the date of the public announcement of the project; (e) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, what is the number of projects which required an extension past March 31, 2011; (f) for each fiscal year and as a total, since April 1, 2009, what is the amount spent on public announcements of projects; (g) for each fiscal year and overall, since April 1, 2009, how many times were government aircraft used to transport officials to announcements related to the fund; and (h) for each individual project sponsored under the fund to date, (i) what was the project's internal file number, (ii) what was the name of the project, (iii) on what date was the application received, (iv) on what date was the application approved, (v) on what date was the project announced publicly, (vi) on what date was the contribution agreement signed, (vii) what was the total federal funding received, (viii) what was the cost of any public announcement related to the project, (ix) did the government pay for any federal official to travel to each announcement in (viii) and, if so, what are the names of these officials and was a government-owned aircraft used to transport them, (x) what was the address of the project, including postal code and federal constituency name, (xi) what was the political party affiliation of the Member of Parliament representing the riding on the date the project was announced?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 276—**Hon. Judy Sgro:**

With regard to the new Post-Retirement Benefit (PRB): (a) what is the purpose of the PRB; (b) what was the rationale for making it mandatory rather than voluntary for seniors who collect the Canada Pension Plan before age 65 and continue working; (c) what actuarial calculations have been made on the PRB's premiums and potential payouts, and what are the results of those calculations; (d) what marketing has the government conducted to make Canadians aware of the PRB and how much was spent on it; (e) for what purposes are funds accumulated in PRB premiums allowed to be used?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 277—**Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to Vulnerable Sector Police Checks: (a) how many Vulnerable Sector Police Checks were processed, for each year since 2006 to the present date, broken down by month; (b) what was the cost to the government each year since 2006 for processing these Vulnerable Sector Police Checks, broken down by month; (c) what is the expected quantity of Vulnerable Sector Police Checks to be processed by the government for the year of 2012; (d) what is the expected cost to the government to process the expected quantity of Vulnerable Sector Police Checks for 2012; and (e) what was the average processing time for a security check in each year from 2006 until the present day?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 278—**Mr. Claude Gravelle:**

With regard to asbestos removal in federally-owned buildings: (a) what is the total amount spent on removal by (i) year, (ii) department or agency, (iii) building or site, (iv) province; (b) what is the total amount of asbestos removed by (i) year, (ii) department or agency, (iii) building or site, (iv) province; (c) what current asbestos removal projects are underway; (d) what are the expected removals for the next ten years by (i) year, (ii) department or agency, (iii) building or site, (iv) province; (e) which department is the lead for asbestos projects; and (f) what are the remaining federal buildings with asbestos by (i) building or site, (ii) province?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 279—**Mr. Sean Casey:**

With regard to the Last Post Fund and the agreements in place with Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) related to funeral expenses: (a) why does VAC not directly take care of the funeral expenses related to the death of veterans; (b) what restrictions exist that prevent a veteran or a veteran's family from obtaining funds given for funeral expenses; (c) how many requests to cover funeral costs have been received by the Last Post Fund in each year since its creation; (d) of the requests in (c), how many were (i) accepted, (ii) rejected; (e) what were the reasons for every rejection in (d); (f) what is the breakdown of accepted requests, by veterans of (i) the First World War, (ii) the Second World War, (iii) the Korean War, (iv) the Gulf War, (v) NATO missions, (vi) Afghanistan, (vii) United Nations missions; (g) are the funds given to veterans to cover funeral expenses treated as taxable income; (h) are the funds given to the families of serving Canadian Forces members treated as taxable income; (i) what plan does VAC have to increase the amount given to families of veterans through the Last Post Fund; (j) what plan does VAC have to change the eligibility criteria for Last Post Fund resources; (k) what steps does VAC plan to take to increase the funds available to veterans so as to match what is given to serving members of the Canadian Forces for their funeral expenses; (l) what is the breakdown of contributions given to the Last Post Fund; (m) how much does VAC spend on the administration and promotion of the Last Post Fund; and (n) are funds allocated to the Last Post Fund subject to the Deficit Reduction Plan and budget cuts of 2011-2012, in the range of five to ten percent?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 280—Ms. Jean Crowder:**

With regard to Service Canada: (a) where are the Employment Insurance (EI) processing centers currently located; (b) how many employees are at each EI processing centre; (c) where are the EI call centers currently located; (d) how many employees are at each EI call centre; (e) where are the Canada Pension Plan/Old Age Security (CPP/OAS) call centers currently located; (f) how many employees are at each CPP/OAS call center; (g) under the new national workload system for EI claim processing, what is the regional breakdown for processing workload; (h) what is the rate of sick leave use among Service Canada employees in total and specifically for (i) EI processing centers, (ii) EI call centers, (iii) CPP/OAS call centers; (j) what is the number of Service Canada employees on short-term disability leave in total and specifically for (i) EI processing centers, (ii) EI call centers, (iii) CPP/OAS call centers; (k) what is the rate of overtime and the number of hours of overtime worked at Service Canada in total and specifically for (i) EI processing centers, (ii) EI call centers, (iii) CPP/OAS call centers; (l) what is the percentage of term Service Canada employees and the percentage of indeterminate Service Canada employees in total and specifically for (i) EI processing centers, (ii) EI call centers, (iii) CPP/OAS call centers; (m) what is the number and percentage of term Service Canada employees who have been employed for more than three years in total and specifically for (i) EI processing centers, (ii) EI call centers, (iii) CPP/OAS call centers; (n) how many management employees (excluded and non-excluded) does Service Canada have in total and specifically for (i) EI processing centers, (ii) EI call centers, (iii) CPP/OAS call centers; (o) how many security guards does Service Canada employ; (p) how many Service Canada centers have a security guard present in total as well as those that specifically deal with EI claims; (q) how many EI overpayments have been assessed during each of the last five years; (r) how many penalties for EI overpayments have been recovered during each of the last five years; (s) what is the average length of time to investigate an overpayment during each of the last five years; (t) how many complaints did the Office of Client Satisfaction receive during each of the last five years; and (u) how long did the average complaint take to investigate and resolve during each of the last five years?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 281—Ms. Jean Crowder:**

With regard to the British Columbia Treaty Process: (a) what substantive actions has the government taken to study the issue of accumulation of interest from treaty loans; (b) how does the debt from this interest affect the treaty negotiations; (c) when will the government outline its new approach to funding for First Nations self-government as announced in the March 2010 budget; (d) how has the federal mandate on negotiation changed since 2006; (e) how many treaty loans will come due in 2012; (f) what is the total value of those treaty loans coming due in 2012; (g) what is the total value of interest on those loans; (h) what steps has the government taken to extend the deadline on treaty loans; (i) when will the government report to the House of Commons on the treaty loan deadline; and (j) what is the communications plan for First Nations regarding the treaty loan deadline, including those First Nations involved in treaty negotiations, those that have dropped out of the process and those that are not involved in treaty negotiations?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 283—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:**

With respect to visa applications: (a) what percentage of foreign nationals who apply for temporary resident visas get rejected by a Canadian visa office; and (b) how many applications for temporary resident visas did each office reject in the last five years?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 286—Mr. Alex Atamanenko:**

With regard to the horse slaughter industry in Canada: (a) does the government know whether third party monitoring of video footage is occurring at Viandes Richelieu and Bouvry Exports and, if so, (i) what is the monitoring criteria, (ii) who is monitoring the footage, (iii) what actions, if any, have been taken as a result of observations, (iv) is footage monitoring to be a daily practice at this and other Canadian horse slaughter plants, (v) how many hours have been monitored, (vi) is footage archived and for how long, (vii) does the recording continuously loop over previous footage; (b) which tissue types and/or bodily fluids are targeted by the government when testing for phenylbutazone and other drugs in horsemeat, (i) what

percentage of drug testing is performed on equine organs (particularly kidney and liver) as opposed to other tissues, such as muscle, (ii) what is the exact methodology and what are the specific testing mechanisms used to detect phenylbutazone and other drugs in horsemeat; (c) what surveys or studies has the government undertaken or relied on to determine the number of overall horse owners and keepers that have administered to horses under their care, even once in the horse's lifetime, substances that are banned for human consumption, in (i) Canada, (ii) the United States (US); (d) what surveys or studies encompassing the overall horse population has the government undertaken or relied on to determine the percentage of veterinarians who routinely administer to horse patients under their care, at any time in the horse's lifetime, substances that are banned for use in food animals, in (i) Canada, (ii) the US; (e) what was the ratio between the number of horses and the number of prescriptions of substances banned for use in food animals at any time in their lifetime, issued by veterinarians to the overall horse population in (i) Canada, (ii) the US; (f) what were the results of European Commission audits of federally-inspected Canadian equine slaughter plants in 2010; (g) does the government have any plans to adopt a policy similar to that of the European Union which stamps new passports on horses over the age of six months as ineligible for the food supply; (h) are the Equine Identity Documents (EID) being kept on record by the slaughter plants; (i) are the EID records being audited by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; (j) what were the results of the most recent audit of the EIDs; (k) has a database been started that can track the EIDs; (l) how many times has the information provided on the EIDs for horses imported from the US been investigated and verified by the slaughterhouse owners, (i) how many slaughterhouse investigations into information on US-sourced EIDs led to horses being rejected as unsuitable for human consumption, (ii) how were the US horses deemed unsuitable for human consumption following EID investigations disposed of by the slaughterhouses; (m) how many times has the information provided on the EIDs for horses acquired from Canadian sources been investigated and verified by the slaughterhouse owners, (i) how many investigations on Canadian horses led to their rejection as unsuitable for human consumption, (ii) how were Canadian horses deemed unsuitable for human consumption disposed of by the slaughterhouses, (iii) how many slaughterhouse investigations into the EID information on Canadian-sourced horses led to them being rejected as unsuitable for human consumption; (n) as a result of information provided on the EIDs, how many horses were quarantined (i) from US sources, (ii) from Canadian sources; (o) how many downer horses were discovered by slaughterhouses in trucks arriving with shipments of equines from (i) US sources, (ii) Canadian sources; (p) for in each case in (n), how were the downer horses and their carcasses and meat disposed of; (q) in response to the findings of the February 2010 undercover investigations at Bouvry Exports and Viandes Richelieu, what changes have been made in the regulations, operations, inspections and infrastructure at federally-inspected facilities that slaughter equines; and (r) in what ways was the individual and management held accountable by the government or in the courts for the incident revealed in the 2010 undercover footage of an employee hitting a horse in the face multiple times?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 287—Ms. Manon Perreault:**

With regard to the Community Inclusion Initiative (CII): (a) will the program be renewed after March 2012; (b) will funding remain the same as in previous years, namely \$3 million per year shared among each province and territory; (c) are any changes to the program being considered and, if so, what are they; (d) when will the agencies concerned, namely the Canadian Association for Community Living and People First of Canada, receive an answer regarding the funding available for their projects; (e) how long will the funding period be after March 2012; (f) how many projects have been funded through this program each year, since the start of the program; (g) for each CII-funded project since the start of the program, (i) how much money did it receive, (ii) how many individuals were directly affected, (iii) in which cities did it take place; and (h) what changes have been made to the program since the July 2007 formative evaluation?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 289—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to all expenditures under \$10,000 by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade since January 1, 2006, excluding grants and contributions, what are the details of these expenditures, categorized by (i) the names of the people or organizations to whom the expenditures were made, (ii) the amounts of the expenditures per recipient, (iii) the dates the expenditures were issued, (iv) the description of the purpose of each expenditure?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 290—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency funding in the riding of Beauséjour since January 1, 2006: (a) what is the total amount of spending by (i) fiscal year, (ii) program; and (b) what is the amount of each spending item by (i) the Atlantic Innovation Fund, (ii) Building Canada Fund, (iii) Business Development Program, (iv) Canada-Atlantic Provinces Agreement on International Business Development, (v) Community Adjustment Fund, (vi) Export Internship for Trade Graduate Initiative, (vii) Innovative Communities Fund, (viii) Recreational Infrastructure Canada, (ix) Sector Export Strategies, (x) Trade Education and Skills Development, (xi) Young Entrepreneurs Development Initiative, (xii) Women in Business Initiative?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 293—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' (DFO) budget for Small Craft Harbours (SCH): (a) what was the total budget for SCH for each of the years from 1988 to present and what were the regional budgets for SCH in each of the years from 1988 to present; (b) what is the current projected budget for SCH for 2012; (c) are any of the SCH budget funds allocated for the regions being held back in a reserve; (d) what, if any, harbours are currently identified as "national priorities"; (e) are there any harbours which are slated to become "national priorities" in the next five years; (f) how much money has been spent to date on the Pangnirtung, Nunavut wharf and from what budget; (g) how much remains to be spent on the Pangnirtung wharf in the future; (h) is the money being spent on Pangnirtung affecting the money available for regional budgets for SCH; (i) what is the total breakdown of all money spent on any and all "national priority" harbours to date; (j) what is the complete breakdown of money spent to date from the \$71.6 million in storm damage funding for Small Craft Harbours announced in March 2011; and (k) if the full amount of \$71.6 million in storm damage funding has not yet been spent, does the government intend to spend that money and when and where will it be spent?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 294—Mr. Frank Valeriote:**

With respect to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and its responsibilities for the administration of the food labelling, packaging and advertising policies under the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act: (a) what is the total number, for each of the fiscal years from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012, across Canada as a whole and broken down by province, of (i) inspectors at the CFIA, (ii) newly hired inspectors at the CFIA, (iii) inspectors who retired from the CFIA, (iv) employees assigned to the CFIA Process, Formulation and Label Registration Unit; (b) what is the total number, for each of the fiscal years from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012, across Canada as a whole and broken down by province, of inspections conducted by a CFIA inspector of a product at a dealer, broken down by (i) retailer, (ii) manufacturer, (iii) processor, (iv) producer, (v) business engaged in importing any product, (vi) business engaged in packing any product, (vii) business engaged in selling any product; (c) for the answer to each part of (b), was the inspection at (i) a site randomly selected, (ii) a site in which the inspection was pre-arranged with any of the individuals or groups identified in (b); (d) for the answer to each part of (c), was the reason for the inspection related to (i) misleading advertising or labelling of exaggerated or unproven nutrition and health claims, (ii) misleading labelling information of the country of origin claims; (e) for the answer to each part of (b), (c) and (d), how many, (i) products or any labelling, packaging or advertising materials were seized and detained by the inspectors, (ii) cases of non-compliance were identified during inspections; (f) for the answer to each part of (e), how many inspections lead to (i) the prosecution of an individual, (ii) the prosecution of a dealer, (iii) a summary conviction or a conviction on indictments of an individual with a fine, (iv) a summary conviction or a conviction on indictments of a dealer with a fine, (v) a summary conviction or a conviction on indictments of an individual with a prison term?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 295—Mr. Marc Garneau:**

With regard to Canada's involvement in the Wideband Global Satcom system: (a) which criteria were used to determine the maximum amount to be spent on the project (\$477 million); (b) within what timeframe and on which budget items is this \$477 million budget planned to be used; (c) does the government's proposal to join the Wideband Global Satcom system explicitly include industrial benefits for Canada; and (d) does the government's proposal include the participation of Canadian aerospace companies and what are the anticipated economic benefits for them of Canada's membership in the system?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 296—Mr. Marc Garneau:**

With regard to the planned funding for the National Homelessness Partnering Strategy: (a) what is the government's strategy to end homelessness in urban and rural communities; (b) how many new transitional supportive and permanent affordable housing units will be funded next year; (c) what is the government's strategy to preserve and modernize Canada's existing social housing stock; (d) what were the economic justifications and social analyses that supported the decision not to renew Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation subsidies for cooperatives, not for profit and other social housing units; (e) what alternatives to social housing are being offered to low income seniors and others who cannot afford market housing and where provinces are not mandated or funded by the federal government to ensure that social housing stock is preserved; (f) what is the planned budget for the National Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding for 2011-2015 and 2015 and beyond; (g) how much money has been disbursed to the National Homelessness Partnering Strategy since 2006 (i) by province, (ii) by city for Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Moncton, St. John's and Halifax; and (h) what is the long term strategy for the National Homelessness Partnering Strategy and the National Homeless Initiative?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 298—Hon. Ralph Goodale:**

For each of the years from 2006 to 2011 inclusive, on average across Canada, how much money has the government invested, per child, in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education of First Nations children, and what is the breakdown of all the component parts of this amount?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 300—Hon. Ralph Goodale:**

With regard to all regulatory co-management land and resource boards in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, which are regulatory bodies that have been established based on the settlement of comprehensive land claim agreements in these territories: (a) for each co-management board, since February 6, 2006, (i) how long, on average, has it taken to fill board vacancies, (ii) how long, on average, has it taken to complete the nomination process, (iii) how long, on average, has it taken to complete the ministerial appointment process, (iv) how many times have boards been unable to meet due to lack of quorum; (b) what steps has the government taken to implement recommendations 29, 30, 31 and 32 of the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, entitled "Northerners' Perspectives for Prosperity", presented to the House in December 2010; and (c) what is the government's plan to streamline the ministerial appointment process to co-management boards?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 301—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:**

With regard to Correctional Services Canada (CSC): (a) does CSC have a national accommodation strategy and, if so, what is it, what time period does it cover and when was it last updated; (b) does CSC have a long-term accommodation strategy and, if so, what is it, what time period does it cover and when was it last updated; (c) does CSC's accommodation strategy take into account bills that amend the Criminal Code passed in the 39th and 40th Parliaments that may result in an influx of inmates to federal correctional institutions and, if so, how does the CSC plan on managing this influx of inmates; (d) if CSC's accommodation strategy doesn't take into account bills passed in the 39th and 40th Parliaments that may result in an influx of inmates to federal correctional institutions, does CSC have a short-term accommodation strategy to address the influx of inmates resulting from bills passed in the 39th and 40th Parliaments and, if so, what is it; (e) does the CSC's accommodation strategy take into account bills currently before the 41st Parliament, 1st session, that may result in more inmates and, if so, how; (f) if CSC's accommodation strategy doesn't take into account bills currently before the 41st Parliament, 1st session, that may result in more inmates, does CSC have a short-term accommodation strategy to address the influx of inmates resulting from bills before Parliament and, if so, what is it; (g) does CSC's accommodation strategy include new program space, education space and other non-accommodation space and, if so, what does it include; (h) does CSC's accommodation strategy mention double-bunking and/or triple-bunking and, if so, what does it say about it; (i) is CSC working on, or has CSC completed, a capital plan for regional complexes and, if so, does this plan involve private-public partnerships for building, financing and maintaining these new facilities; (j) is CSC considering and/or investigating the involvement of private industry in the building, financing or administration of existing federal institutions; (k) has CSC consulted with any outside contractors regarding the construction of new facilities and, if so, who and when; (l) has the CSC consulted with any outside contractors regarding the administration of existing correctional institutions and, if so, who and when; (m) since 2006, broken down annually, how much has CSC spent on creating double-bunking cells, including on design, fabrication and installation; (n) how much does CSC plan to spend over the next ten years on creating double-bunking cells, including on design, fabrication and installation; (o) how does CSC plan to address the growing proportion of inmates affected by mental health issues; (p) what does CSC policy and guidelines say about the use of segregation for mentally ill inmates; and (q) how often over the last 5 years have inmates with diagnosed mental illnesses been put in segregation and, if so, for how long?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 302—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:**

With regard to the National Parole Board (NPB): (a) specifically with reference to Bill C-59, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (accelerated parole review) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, which was passed by Parliament in the 3rd Session of the 40th Parliament, (i) has the NPB seen an increase in the number of files they are dealing with directly, and, if so, by how many, (ii) does the NPB have an estimate of how many additional cases on an annual basis they expect to have to handle as a result of this bill's passage, (iii) has the government allocated additional monetary or personnel resources to the NPB to help them cope with the influx of cases as a result of this bill; (b) with reference to all other criminal justice bills passed in the 39th and 40th Parliaments, (i) has the NPB seen an increase in the number of files they are dealing with directly, and, if so, by how many, (ii) does the NPB have an estimate of how many additional cases on an annual basis they expect to have to handle as a result of each bill's passage, (iii) has the government allocated additional monetary or personnel resources to the NPB to help them cope with the influx of cases as a result of these bills; and (c) with regard to the criminal justice bills currently before the 41st Parliament, (i) does the NPB anticipate seeing an increase in the number of files they are dealing with directly, and, if so, by how many, (ii) does the government plan on allocating additional monetary or personnel resources to the NPB to help them cope with the influx of cases as a result of these bills; and (d) has the NPB received any complaints about their ability to meet their mandate, and, if so, when, what types of complaints and from whom?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 304—Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to Environment Canada, for every year since 2006: (a) how many requests have been made to have departmental employees, and not ministerial exempt staff, give scientific information to members of the media; (b) how many of these requests were declined and for what reason; and (c) who gave the order to decline each request?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 305—Hon. Stéphane Dion:**

With regard to nuclear safety and earthquake preparedness: (a) for each Canadian nuclear reactor, what is the maximum seismic force that each facility is believed to be equipped to withstand; (b) what facilities are currently receiving seismic upgrades; (c) what tests are used to assess earthquake preparedness at each facility; and (d) at what interval are these tests carried out?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 306—Hon. Stéphane Dion:**

With regard to the unanimous resolution passed in the House of Commons on December 7, 2010, that endorsed a nuclear weapons convention: (a) what meetings has the government held to follow up on this resolution; (b) what briefing notes were prepared for these meetings; (c) will the government be attending the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in South Korea, as a follow-up to the 2010 summit that was commended in the resolution; and (d) has the government engaged with other countries to follow up on the principles outlined in the unanimous resolution and, if so, which countries?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 309—Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With regard to the Privy Council Office, specifically the Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet (Communications and Consultations division): (a) how many people does it employ; (b) what is its function; and (c) how much has been spent by the division each year since 2006?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 311—Hon. Mark Eyking:**

With regard to the renting of venues or properties for executive retreats or meetings outside of a government department, agency or Crown Corporation's own offices (i.e., where an expense for rental of rooms is made to an outside party), from 2006 to December 1, 2011, for all government departments, agencies and Crown corporations: (a) what was the total cost of the rental of these venues for each department, agency or Crown corporation; (b) for each department, agency and Crown corporation, how many times were venues or properties contracted for or rented; and (c) in each case, (i) what was the name and location of the venue or property, (ii) what was the reason or purpose of the venue or property rental, (iii) how many people attended the retreat or meeting, (iv) what was the overall cost of the rental of the venue?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 312—Hon. Mark Eyking:**

With regard to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for each year since 2006, how many applications for registration under the Indian Act have been approved and how many have been rejected?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 313—Hon. Mark Eyking:**

What is the date, time, location, and nature of all government business conducted by the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism from July 29 to August 9, 2011, inclusively?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 314—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:**

With regard to the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START): (a) what projects have been approved in the last fiscal year and this year; (b) what has the budget been for the last fiscal year and this year; and (c) what is the proposed budget for next year?

(Return tabled)



*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 317—Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, as of December 1, 2011, how many Canadian citizens have been detained, arrested or imprisoned abroad and by which countries?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 319—Hon. Denis Coderre:**

With regard to the Haiti earthquake relief fund put in place by the government following the devastating January 2010 event: (a) what is the total amount of the fund; (b) what are all the programs that have received funding from it; and (c) what is the amount and the name of the organisations that have received the funding?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 320—Hon. Denis Coderre:**

With regard to the Department of National Defence and the operational capability of our fleet of Buffalo aircraft: (a) what is their percentage of availability; (b) how many hours of maintenance do they require per hour of flight; (c) what is the number of in-flight incidents that have required an aircraft to abort its rescue mission; (d) what is the number of missions that have been conducted since 2006; and (e) what has been the cost of maintaining this fleet since 2006?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 327—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:**

With regard to National Parole Board (NPB) appointments since 2006: (a) what are the names of the appointees; (b) what is the professional background of each appointee; (c) what is the appointment length for each appointee; and (d) what is the remuneration for each appointee?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 328—Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to Employment Insurance applications processed by Service Canada (SC) in Newfoundland and Labrador for each year between 2006 and 2011 to date, inclusively, and for each specific SC office by month: (a) how many applications were processed for (i) regular claims, (ii) fishing claims; (b) what were the average and median processing times for (i) regular claims, (ii) fishing claims; and (c) how many of the applications (i) received immediate approval, (ii) were approved after some follow-up between SC officials and the applicant, (iii) were rejected, (iv) were appealed, (v) were approved after appeal?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 329—Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to Canada Post outlets in Newfoundland and Labrador, by electoral riding and for each year between 2006 and 2010 inclusively: (a) how many outlets were operational; (b) in which communities were the operational outlets located; (c) what was the total financial expenditure for each of these outlets per year for (i) labor, (ii) capital/repair and maintenance; and (d) were the same outlets operational in 2011, and, if not, in what year did the operations cease?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 331—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:**

With regard to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsed by the government in November 2010: (a) what concrete actions has the government taken to implement the Declaration; (b) what steps has the government taken to consult with First Nations on the implementation of the Declaration; (c) what steps has the government taken to consult with the provincial and territorial governments on the implementation of the Declaration; (d) how does the government define the term “aspirational” which it has used to characterize its approach to implementing the Declaration; (e) are there any other international agreements that the government considers not legally binding or “aspirational”; (f) what criteria does the government use to determine whether a policy is “aspirational”; (g) what is the government’s position concerning whether or not the Declaration will be binding in the future; (h) did the government communicate its position that the Declaration is “aspirational” and non-binding to First Nations and the other levels of government in advance of endorsing the Declaration; (i) what

directives have been provided to Ministers, political exempt staff and public servants concerning the use of the Declaration in developing policy and programs; (j) does a process exist to ensure that all legislation, regulations and policy concerning indigenous peoples are compliant with the Declaration; and (k) has training on the Declaration been provided to employees of the Treasury Board and Privy Council Office?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 332—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:**

With regard to the government’s on-reserve housing policy administered by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, per First Nations community: (a) what is the number of (i) additional housing units required to meet the current demand for housing, (ii) additional housing units required to meet the expected future demand for housing, (iii) existing housing units assessed as being in good condition, (iv) existing housing stock assessed as being in fair condition and requiring minor repairs and maintenance, (v) existing housing stock assessed as being in poor condition and requiring significant repairs and maintenance; (b) what is the average estimated cost of (i) building a new housing unit, (ii) repairing an existing housing unit assessed as being in fair condition, (iii) repairing an existing housing unit assessed as being in poor condition; and (c) for fiscal years 2006-2007 to 2010-2011 what has been (i) the rate of new housing construction, (ii) the rate of repairs to existing housing stock, (iii) the extent of overcrowding, (iv) the total funding allocation in new housing construction, (v) the total funding allocation in housing repairs and maintenance?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 333—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ (DFO) Evaluation of the Fisheries Resources Science Program (Project number 6B139): (a) what are the reasons for the decrease in the number of publications and public communications being produced by the Fisheries Resources Science (FRS) Program; (b) is this decrease projected to continue into the future; (c) what is the total number of publications produced by FRS in each of the years from 2000 to present; (d) what are the challenges associated with moving towards a complex ecosystems-based approach and how does FRS plan to address these challenges; (e) what effects will present and future budget cuts to DFO have on the move to this approach; (f) how does DFO intend to deal with the skills shortage among FRS staff in the quantitative/modeling areas; (g) how does DFO plan to address the increasing science requests to FRS; and (h) will any current FRS staff that are slated to retire in the next four years be replaced by new staff?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 335—Mr. David McGuinty:**

With respect to the project in conjunction with Public Works and Government Services Canada and Environment Canada which involves the Place Vincent Massey Building at 351 St. Joseph Boulevard in Gatineau, Quebec: (a) who made the decision not to proceed with the waste and cost reduction strategy of refurbishing the existing workstations; (b) what criteria were used in determining that the procurement process for refurbishment was time consuming and that buying was easier; (c) what were the expected costs for refurbishment to fit up the property; (d) what analysis was conducted to determine whether to buy new or to refurbish; (e) who approved the budget for the new furniture; (f) who approved the cost of storing the existing furniture; (g) what is the complete inventory of workstations and other furniture being stored, (i) how long will the previously mentioned furniture inventory be stored, (ii) what are the total storage costs expected to be, (iii) how much of this furniture has been declared surplus and will be sold; and (h) what is the total cost for new furniture at Place Vincent Massey?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 336—Mr. David McGuinty:**

With respect to Canada's oil sands: (a) how does the government define the oil sands geographically; (b) what are the known reserves in the oil sands; (c) how many jobs are directly or indirectly linked to the oil sands, (i) where, specifically, are these jobs located, (ii) in what sectors are the previously mentioned jobs; (d) how much revenue accrues annually to the government from oil sands exploitation for the years 2000 to 2011 inclusively; (e) what infrastructure investments regarding oil sands have been made by the government since January 2006; and (f) what federal subsidies are in place to incentivise oil sands exploitation and what has it cost the government on an annual basis since 2000?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 337—Ms. Irene Mathysen:**

With regard to website development and redevelopment since fiscal year 2003-2004, up to and including the current fiscal year: (a) how much has the government spent on altering, improving, branding or otherwise amending the websites for the government and all departmental websites, broken down by fiscal year and department; and (b) what, if any, contracts were awarded to carry out this work, broken down by fiscal year and department, (i) what was, if any, the bidding process for these contracts, broken down by fiscal year and department, (ii) how many applications were received for the contracts, broken down by fiscal year and department?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 340—Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

With regard to each Canadian flag that has flown above the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill since January 1, 2010: (a) who received each flag; (b) for what purpose or occasion did the recipient indicate the flag was being requested or would be used; (c) for requests in which the intended recipient was different than the requestor, who was the requestor's intended recipient; (d) the number of flags distributed each day throughout the period covered within this request; and (e) the average cost per unit to the government for each flag?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 342—Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

Since January 1, 2010, for each Minister, Minister of State and Parliamentary Secretary, how many times did he or she travel by government-owned or leased aircraft inside or outside of Canada, and for each trip: (a) what was the departure point and date; (b) what was the arrival point and date; (c) what type of aircraft was used; (d) who owned each aircraft; (e) who accompanied the Minister; (f) what was the purpose of the trip; (g) what is the source of funds and budget that was used to pay for each trip; (h) what was the total cost; and (i) what was the menu for in-flight meals made available to the Minister or other travelers?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 345—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:**

How much has the government spent in total for all government programs, grants and services between February 6, 2006, to December 1, 2011, in the City of Calgary and the City of Edmonton?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 346—Mr. Frank Valeriote:**

With regard to all departments, agencies and crown corporations, how much has the government spent on the Port Hope Project and the Port Granby Project as of December 1, 2011?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 347—Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to the Privy Council Office, on what date did it receive a request for approval of a news release for the joint announcement between the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and the Minister of National Defence that took place on July 9, 2010, regarding the awarding of a contract to General Dynamics Land Systems – Canada of London, Ontario, for the Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) III Upgrade Project and when was the approval given?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 348—Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to the Minister of National Defence being picked up in Newfoundland from a fishing lodge on the Gander River and being brought to Gander by a Canadian Forces Cormorant in July 2010, what communications were sent between the Office of the Minister of Defence, the Office of the Chief of the Defence Staff, the Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Base Gander, the 103 Search and Rescue Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Office of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 349—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:**

With regard to the Minister of National Defence being picked up in Newfoundland from a fishing lodge on the Gander River and being brought to Gander by a Canadian Forces Cormorant in July 2010, what telephone activity for the 96 hours preceding the aforementioned event was there from the cellular telephones of the Minister of Defence and his Chief of Staff, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and his Chief of Staff, the Chief of the Defence Staff and his Chief of Staff, and the Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard and his Chief of Staff?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 351—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With regard to the Department of Public Works and Government Services, in relation to its announcement of July 9, 2010, awarding a contract to General Dynamics Land Systems – Canada of London, Ontario, for the Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) III Upgrade Project: (a) on what date did the department start planning for this event; (b) on what date was General Dynamics informed it had won the contract; (c) on what date was the funding for this contract approved; (d) who was invited to this event, (i) who accepted the invitation and when, (ii) who declined the invitation and when; (e) on what date was the request to approve the press release for this event sent to the Privy Council Office; (f) when was the list of speakers finalized; (g) on what date was the Minister of Public Works and Government Services's office informed this event was taking place; and (h) on what date was the Minister of National Defence's office informed this event was taking place?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 353—Hon. Irwin Cotler:**

With regard to wrongful convictions: (a) how many applications were received by the government under s. 696.1 of the Criminal Code in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and thus far in 2011; (b) how many of these applications were reviewed by the Criminal Conviction Review Group in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and thus far in 2011; (c) on what occasions since 2006 has the Minister referred a wrongful conviction matter to a Court under 696.3(3)(i) or 696.3(3)(ii); and (d) what specific measures is the government undertaking regarding each of the recommendations contained in the Department of Justice 2005 Report on the Prevention of Miscarriages of Justice?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 354—Mr. Scott Simms:**

With respect to Parks Canada, from 2006 to date, broken down by activity and by park, how much was spent on highway infrastructure with regard to (i) paving, (ii) shoulder restoration, (iii) individually, all other categories of spending on highway infrastructure?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 355—Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to funding for the commemoration of the War of 1812: (a) which budget did the funding come; (b) how much money was diverted from each program or budget under Canadian Heritage, Environment Canada and Parks Canada towards activities and programs pertaining to the War of 1812 commemoration; and (c) was there any "one time only" funding for the War of 1812 commemoration?

(Return tabled)

## Routine Proceedings

Question No. 356—**Mr. Philip Toone:**

With regard to Aboriginal Labour Market Programs, specifically for each of the following, Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership and Aboriginal Skills and Employment Fund: (a) which organizations received funding, broken down by province, in (i) 2009, (ii) 2010, (iii) 2011; (b) for each funding recipient, broken down by province, when were the decisions made regarding which organizations would receive funding in (i) 2009, (ii) 2010, (iii) 2011; (c) broken down by province, when was each funding recipient notified that they would receive funding in (i) 2009, (ii) 2010, (iii) 2011; (d) what were the amounts each funding recipient received, broken down by province, in (i) 2009 (ii) 2010, (iii) 2011; (e) broken down by province, when were the funds released to the funding recipients in (i) 2009, (ii) 2010, (iii) 2011; (f) what criteria were used to rank the applications in (i) 2009, (ii) 2010, (iii) 2011; (g) broken down by province, how many organizations that applied for funding have been notified that they will not receive funding in 2011 and when were they notified; (h) how many applicants are still awaiting decisions from 2011, broken down by province; (i) how much funding was used in (i) 2009, (ii) 2010, (iii) 2011 and how much remained in the fund at the end of the each fiscal year, broken down by province; and (j) broken down by province, how many funding recipients had to return funds in (i) 2009, (ii) 2010, (iii) 2011 because they could not complete projects according to the timelines set out by the program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 357—**Mr. Philip Toone:**

With regard to the Broadband Canada: Connecting Rural Canadians program: (a) as of March 31, 2012, what percentage of Canadians will have access to broadband speeds of at least 1.5 megabytes per second broken down by (i) Geographic Service Area, (ii) year; (b) as of March 31, 2012, how many Canadians are expected to receive broadband access through the program, broken down by (i) Geographic Service Area, (ii) project, (ii) year; (c) from the beginning of the program to this day, how many Canadians were expected to be connected to broadband, broken down by (i) Geographic Service Area, (ii) project, (iii) year; (d) from the beginning of the program until this day, what is the total number of Canadians who have been connected to broadband, and what is the speed of the connection (i) in megabytes per second, (ii) by Geographic Service Area, (iii) by project, (iv) by year; and (e) in order to reach the program's goal of 98% connectivity, will the program be extended beyond March 2012?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 358—**Hon. Bob Rae:**

With regard to internal studies and reports conducted or commissioned by the Department of Justice and Public Safety Canada that discuss the effectiveness of harsher sentences: (a) how many internal studies and reports have been conducted or commissioned by the Department of Justice since 2006 that discuss this subject; (b) how many internal studies and reports that discuss this subject had been conducted or commissioned by the Department of Justice prior to 2006; (c) what is the title and who are the authors of each internal study or report commissioned since 2006 by the Department of Justice that discuss or mention this subject; (d) by whom and for whom were each of these internal studies or reports requested; (e) what conclusions did each report conducted prior to 2006 reach about the effectiveness of harsher sentences as a deterrent to crime; (f) what conclusions has each report conducted since 2006 reached about the effectiveness of harsher sentences as a deterrent to crime; (g) did these internal reports and studies put forward alternative crime prevention solutions deemed more effective, and, if so what were they; (h) were these internal reports and studies shared with the Minister of Justice or Minister of Public Safety prior to 2006 and, if so, when and how; and (i) have these internal reports and studies been shared with the Minister of Justice or the Minister of Public Safety since 2006 and, if so, when and how?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 359—**Hon. Bob Rae:**

With regard to the Department of Health: (a) what First Nations communities have been under a drinking water advisory each year since 2006, broken down by individual First Nation community and type of advisory; and (b) how long have these advisories been in effect for each community?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 360—**Hon. Bob Rae:**

With regard to the projected costs of Bill C-10, An Act to enact the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other Acts: (a) did the government conduct an impact analysis for this bill; (b) does the government have an estimate of the total cost of this bill and, if so, what is it; (c) what is the government's cost estimate for Correctional Services Canada as a result of this Bill; (d) what is the government's cost estimate for the National Parole Board as a result of this Bill; (e) are there any other departments or agencies that the government expects will be impacted by this legislation, and, if so, what are the estimated costs, broken down by department and agency; (f) what is the federal government's cost estimate for the provinces as a result of this bill, broken down by province, and has the government shared these cost estimates with the provinces; (g) what is the government's cost estimate for the territories as a result of this bill, broken down by territory, and has the government shared these cost estimates with the territories; (h) how does the government plan on managing provinces that refuse to pay for the implementation of this Bill; and (i) will the federal government pay for the implementation of this Bill in provinces where the provincial government refuses?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 361—**Hon. Bob Rae:**

With regard to the projected impacts of Bill C-10, An Act to enact the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other Acts, on the number of inmates and their conditions of incarceration: (a) does the government have an estimate of how many new inmates this Bill is likely to create, and, if so, what is it; (b) how many new federal inmates does the government expect will result from this Bill; (c) how many new provincial inmates does the government expect will result from this Bill, and has the government shared this estimate with the provinces; (d) how many new young offenders does the government expect will result from this Bill and has the government shared this estimate with the provinces; (e) how many new inmates is CSC planning for as a direct result of this bill; (f) how will this Bill affect the federal incarceration rate of aboriginals, broken down geographically and by sex; (g) how will this Bill affect the provincial incarceration rate of aboriginals, broken down geographically and by sex; (h) how will this Bill affect the youth incarceration rate of aboriginals, broken down geographically and by sex; (i) what resources will be allocated to meet the unique needs of the aboriginal offenders, broken down geographically and by sex; (j) what resources will be allocated to meet the needs of the increased aboriginal offender population, broken down geographically and by sex; (k) how many new staff does CSC anticipate will need to be hired as a result of this Bill, broken down by job type; (l) has CSC planned for additional programming to accommodate the influx of new inmates resulting from this Bill, and, if so, how many new programming spaces will be created, broken down by type; (m) how is the government planning to cope with the additional safety and security issues that arise within institutions as a result of the influx of new inmates this Bill creates; (n) how is the government planning to cope with the additional public health issues, including the spread of Hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS, that will arise within institutions as a result of the influx of new inmates this Bill creates; (o) how many new cells does the government estimate will need to be constructed as a result of this Bill, broken down by type of cell, and when and where will these new cells be constructed; (p) how many cells does the government estimate will be double-bunked as a result of this Bill, broken down by type of cell; and (q) how many cells does the government estimate will be triple-bunked as a result of this Bill, broken down by type of cell?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 362—**Hon. Scott Brison:**

With regard to ongoing job cuts in the federal public service in Prince Edward Island: (a) how many termination notices were issued for all federal public service positions in Prince Edward Island for the time period from November 30, 2010, to November 30, 2011, broken down by (i) month, (ii) department, agency, crown corporation and other organizations, (iii) job type (indeterminate, specified term, casual and student); (b) how many student co-op positions in Prince Edward Island will be eliminated by the federal government during this fiscal year; and (c) and how many student co-op positions in Prince Edward Island were offered by the federal government during the previous five fiscal years?

*Routine Proceedings*

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 365—Hon. Scott Brison:**

With regard to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada funding in the riding of Kings—Hants for the last five fiscal years: (a) what is the total amount of spending by (i) year, (ii) program; and (b) what is the amount of each spending item by (i) Technical Assistance and Foreign-Based Cooperative Activities (International Trade and Labour Program), (ii) Skills Link (Youth Employment Strategy), (iii) Consultation and Partnership-Building and Canadian-Based Cooperative Activities (International Trade and Labour Program), (iv) Canada Summer Jobs (Youth Employment Strategy), (v) Children and Families (Social Development Partnerships Program), (vi) Labour Market Development Agreements, (vii) Labour Market Agreements, (viii) Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities, (ix) Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities, (x) Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, (xi) Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment, (xii) Enabling Accessibility Fund, (xiii) Skills and Partnership Fund—Aboriginal, (xiv) Targeted Initiative for Older Workers, (xv) International Academic Mobility Initiative—Canada-European Union Program for Co-operation in Higher Education, Training and Youth, (xvi) International Academic Mobility Initiative—Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education, (xvii) Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative, (xviii) International Labour Institutions in which Canada Participates (International Trade and Labour Program), (xix) Labour Mobility, (xx) New Horizons for Seniors, (xxi) Career Focus (Youth Employment Strategy), (xxii) Fire Safety Organizations, (xxiii) Organizations that Write Occupational Health and Safety Standards, (xxiv) Social Development Partnerships Program—Disability, (xxv) Foreign Credential Recognition Program Loans (pilot project), (xxvi) Fire Prevention Canada, (xxvii) Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program, (xxviii) Canada-European Union Program for Co-operation in Higher Education, Training and Youth (International Academic Mobility Initiative), (xxix) Labour-Management Partnerships Program, (xxx) Social Development Partnerships Program—Children and Families, (xxxi) Social Development Partnerships Program—Disability, (xxxii) Foreign Credential Recognition Program, (xxxiii) International Trade and Labour Program—Technical Assistance and Foreign-Based Cooperative Activities, (xxxiv) International Trade and Labour Program—Consultation and Partnership-Building and Canadian-Based Cooperative Activities, (xxxv) International Trade and Labour Program—International Labour Institutions in which Canada Participates, (xxxvi) Sector Council Program, (xxxvii) Federal Public Sector Youth Internship Program (Youth Employment Strategy), (xxxviii) Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership Program, (xxxix) Employment Programs—Career Development Services Research, (xl) Career Development Services Research (Employment Programs), (xli) Occupational Health and Safety, (xlii) Youth Awareness, (xliii) Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy, (xliv) Homelessness Partnering Strategy, (xlv) Youth Employment Strategy—Skills Link, (xlvi) Youth Employment Strategy—Canada Summer Jobs, (xlvii) Youth Employment Strategy—Career Focus, (xlviii) Youth Employment Strategy—Federal Public Sector Youth Internship Program, (xlix) Apprenticeship Completion Grant, (l) Apprenticeship Incentive Grant, (li) Work-Sharing, (lii) Small Project Component (Enabling Accessibility Fund)?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 366—Mr. Claude Gravelle:**

With regard to Canadian mining companies: (a) what is the government's position on the use of leach mining in Canada and internationally; (b) have the impacts of leach mining on adjacent communities been studied and, if so, what are the titles of the documents of these studies; (c) what is the government's position on the use of private security firms by Canadian mining companies internationally; (d) what countries has the government, directly or through foreign representation, been actively lobbying or encouraging to lower royalties and taxes on foreign mining companies; (e) has the government been tracking what companies have outstanding taxes or debts owed to foreign countries and, if so, how much do these companies owe foreign countries by company, country, type of debt, amount of debt; (f) what is the government's position on conflicts between Canadian mining companies and indigenous peoples in Canada and internationally; (g) what is the government's position on the displacement of indigenous peoples and Canadian mining companies internationally; (h) what is the government's position on the contamination of water supplies by Canadian mining companies internationally; and (i) what is the government's position on making the corporate social responsibility framework for mining companies mandatory instead of voluntary?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 367—Mr. Claude Gravelle:**

With regard to abandoned oil wells: (a) what is the government's position on the reclamation of abandoned oil wells in Canada; (b) how many abandoned oil wells exist in Canada and where are they located; (c) how many abandoned oil wells have been reclaimed since 2000 by year, broken down by location, date of reclamation and cost of reclamation per well; (d) what is the estimated cost to secure and reclaim all outstanding abandoned oil wells; (e) what oversights are in place to ensure Canadians are not negatively impacted by these abandoned oil wells; (f) what are the titles of the studies or reports done by or on behalf of the government that cover, in whole or in part, the subject of abandoned oil wells in Canada; and (g) which federal or provincial agencies are responsible for covering the costs of well reclamation?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 368—Mr. Claude Gravelle:**

With regard to health effects of Northern Alberta oil sands: (a) what are the cancer rates for citizens living in communities that are in close proximity to the Northern Alberta oil sands and its tailings ponds; (b) what impact does living in close proximity to the Northern Alberta oil sands and its tailings ponds have on the health of those Canadians; (c) what are the cancer rates for citizens working in the Northern Alberta oil sands; (d) what impact does working in the Northern Alberta oil sands have on the health of those citizens; (e) what are the titles of the studies or reports done by or on behalf of the government on the subject of the health effects of living in close proximity to the Northern Alberta oil sands and its tailings ponds; (f) what are the titles of the studies or reports done by or on behalf of the government that cover, in whole or in part, the subject of the effects of oil sands extraction and tailings ponds on wildlife in close proximity to the Northern Alberta oil sands and its tailings ponds; (g) what information does the government have about the risk or incidences of tailing ponds leakage into the Athabasca river; (h) how much tailing ponds leakage into the Athabasca river has been reported to the government, recorded by year; (i) what are the effects of tailing ponds leakage into the Athabasca river on communities downstream; (j) what are the effects of tailing ponds leakage into the Athabasca river on fish in the river and surrounding wildlife; (k) what steps has the government taken to ensure tailing ponds leakage into the Athabasca river has been mitigated; (l) for those living in close proximity of the Northern Alberta oil sands, what is the anticipated impact of future developments on (i) health, (ii) economic development, (iii) environment, (iv) water supplies, (v) the Athabasca River, (vi) infrastructure; and (m) what are the titles of the studies or reports done by or on behalf of the government that cover, in whole or in part, the subject of anticipated impact of future developments of the Northern Alberta oil sands?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 369—Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to grants, contributions and contracts by the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency since August 18, 2009: (a) what funding applications were approved by the Minister's office, as identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) number of times previously submitted, (iv) date approved, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount awarded, (vii) sector, (viii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (b) what funding applications were rejected by the Minister's office, identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) total amount of submitted applications, (iv) date rejected, (v) amount requested, (vi) sector, (vii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (c) for each federal electoral district, what is the total value of funding requests that were (i) approved, (ii) rejected; and (d) what untendered contracts were issued by or on behalf of the Minister?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 370—Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to grants, contributions and contracts by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario since October 4, 2004: (a) what funding applications were approved by the Minister's office, as identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) number of times previously submitted, (iv) date approved, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount awarded, (vii) sector, (viii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (b) what funding applications were rejected by the Minister's office, identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) total amount of submitted applications, (iv) date rejected, (v) amount requested, (vi) sector, (vii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (c) for each federal electoral district, what is the total value of funding requests that were (i) approved, (ii) rejected; and (d) what untendered contracts were issued by or on behalf of the Minister?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 371—Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to grants, contributions and contracts by the Canada Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec since October 4, 2004: (a) what funding applications were approved by the Minister's office, as identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) number of times previously submitted, (iv) date approved, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount awarded, (vii) sector, (viii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (b) what funding applications were rejected by the Minister's office, identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) total amount of submitted applications, (iv) date rejected, (v) amount requested, (vi) sector, (vii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (c) for each federal electoral district, what is the total value of funding requests that were (i) approved, (ii) rejected; and (d) what untendered contracts were issued by or on behalf of the Minister?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 372—Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to grants, contributions and contracts by Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency since October 4, 2004: (a) what funding applications were approved by the Minister's office, as identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) number of times previously submitted, (iv) date approved, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount awarded, (vii) sector, (viii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (b) what funding applications were rejected by the Minister's office, identified by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) total amount of submitted applications, (iv) date rejected, (v) amount requested, (vi) sector, (vii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (c) for each federal electoral district, what is the total value of funding requests that were (i) approved, (ii) rejected; and (d) what untendered contracts were issued by or on behalf of the Minister?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 373—Ms. Françoise Boivin:**

With regard to reports of sexual harassment in federal workplaces since 2000, broken down by year and divided by department: (a) what is the number of reported instances of sexual harassment; (b) what is the number of resolved complaints; (c) what is the number of unresolved complaints; (d) what is the number of disciplinary actions stemming from complaints; (e) what is the shortest period in which a complaint was resolved; (f) what is the longest period in which a complaint has

waited for resolution, including cases still pending; (g) what is the number of pending cases; (h) what are the different classifications or types the department uses to identify these complaints; (i) what is the department's protocol in dealing with reported sexual harassment; and (j) what are the titles of the studies or reports done by or on behalf of the government that cover, in whole or in part, the subject of sexual harassment in the federal workplace?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 374—Ms. Françoise Boivin:**

With regard to the projected cost of implementing Bill C-10, An Act to enact the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other Acts, over the next ten years, divided by year: (a) what will be the total cost to the federal government; (b) what will be the total cost to each province and territory; (c) divided by estimated federal and provincial/territorial costs, (i) what will be the total cost for prison infrastructure, for changes to the Young Offender Act, of the new and increased mandatory minimum sentences, of eliminating conditional sentences, and of increased penalties for drug crimes, (ii) how were these projected costs arrived at, (iii) what was the methodology involved in calculating these costs, (iv) who was tasked with calculating these costs; and (d) what are the titles of the studies or reports done by or on behalf of the government that cover, in whole or in part, the subject of Bill C-10?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 375—Hon. Mauril Bélanger:**

With regard to the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013, what are the actual expenditures by department and program for fiscal years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 376—Hon. Mauril Bélanger:**

With respect to the Action Plan for Official Languages 2003-2008, what were the actual expenditures by fiscal year, department and program?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 381—Ms. Elizabeth May:**

With regard to each document detailing the capture, transfer, and treatment of Afghan detainees by Canadian and Afghan forces between 2002 and 2009, excluding all matters which are in their nature secret and excluding those documents tabled in the House of Commons on March 25, 2010, April 1, 2011, and June 22, 2011: (a) what are the details of each document; (b) what are the names of the (i) sender, (ii) recipients; and (c) on what date was it sent?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 383—Ms. Libby Davies:**

With regard to the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy (FTCS) : (a) for Health Canada's activities under the strategy for each fiscal year from 2000-2001 to the current fiscal year, what was the (i) original budget provision, (ii) final budget allocation, (iii) actual expenditures; (b) for each fiscal year from 2000-2001 to the current fiscal year, was any budgetary allocation re-directed from the FTCS to other Health Canada activities and, if so, (i) what were those activities; (c) for mass media or public education activities for each fiscal year from 2000-2001 to the current fiscal year, what were the (i) budget allocations, (ii) actual expenditures; (d) have the evaluations of the strategy established the reasons why the Framework Convention Tobacco Control's goal of 12 percent smoking prevalence by 2012 was not reached and, if so, what are those reasons; and (e) are there any elements of the FTCS that will not be in place in 2012-2013 and, if so, what are they?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 384—Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With regard to grants, contributions and contracts by the Regional Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor) since October 4, 2004: (a) what funding applications were approved by the Minister's office, broken down by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) number of times previously submitted, (iv) date approved, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount awarded, (vii) sector, (viii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (b) what funding applications were rejected by the Minister's office, broken down by (i) project name, (ii) applicant name, (iii) total amount of submitted applications, (iv) date rejected, (v) amount requested, (vi) sector, (vii) federal electoral district determined by application address; (c) for each federal electoral district, what is the total value of funding requests that were (i) approved, (ii) rejected; and (d) what untendered contracts were issued by or on behalf of the Minister?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 385—Mr. Brian Jean:**

For questions Q-1 through Q-376 on the Order Paper, what is the estimated cost of the government's response to each question?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 387—Hon. Wayne Easter:**

With regard to the Department of National Defence, since August 14, 2007: (a) how many times has the Minister of National Defence used military equipment for travel; (b) what type of equipment was used; (c) what is the detailed list of each trip; (d) what was the destination of each trip; and (e) what was the cost of each trip?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 388—Hon. Wayne Easter:**

How much has each member of Cabinet spent on limousine and taxi services since January 1, 2009?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 389—Hon. Wayne Easter:**

How much did the government spend in travel and hospitality for its failed bid to win a seat on the United Nations Security Council in 2010?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 390—Ms. Laurin Liu:**

With regard to the debris from the 2011 Japanese tsunami headed towards Canada's west coast: (a) has there been an environmental assessment done, (i) if so, what were the results, (ii) if not, why not; (b) has the government assessed the impact of this situation on Canada's economy, (i) if so, what were the results, (ii) if not, why not; (c) has the government assessed the implications of radioactivity, (i) if so, what were the results, (ii) if not, why not; (d) has the government assessed the approximate timeline of this event, (i) if so, what were the results, (ii) if not, why not; and (e) what are the titles of the studies or reports done, by or on behalf of the government, that cover, in whole or in part, this event?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 391—Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:**

With regard to the Chart of Accounts budget line A153, broken down by fiscal years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010: (a) what were all funds distributed from this account and (i) their date of distribution, (ii) their recipient, (iii) their intended purpose, (iv) the corresponding vote associated with their distribution, (v) the signing authority for their distribution; and (b) what is the policy of the department regarding charging multiple projects under a single budget line?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 392—Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:**

With regard to full-time permanent employees in the government as of December 10, 2011, broken down by department: (a) how many are managers; (b) how many are non-managers; (c) how many earn more than \$100,000 a year; (d) how many earn

more than \$150,000 a year; (e) how many earn less than \$40,000 a year; and (f) how many earn less than \$75,000 a year?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 393—Ms. Laurin Liu:**

With regard to the Guaranteed Income Supplement, how many beneficiaries were there in each federal electoral riding in the most recent month with data available?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 396—Ms. Jean Crowder:**

With regard to employment policy and programs overseen by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada or delivered by Service Canada: (a) what research went into the design of each of the following policies and programs, (i) the Aboriginal Labour Market Programs, (ii) Employment Insurance, (iii) Employment Measures, (iv) Labour Market Agreements; (b) how is each of the following policies and programs monitored for outcomes, (i) the Aboriginal Labour Market Programs, (ii) Employment Insurance, (iii) Employment Measures, (iv) Labour Market Agreements; (c) what studies were conducted to ensure each of the following policies and programs was performing as planned, (i) the Aboriginal Labour Market Programs, (ii) Employment Insurance, (iii) Employment Measures, (iv) Labour Market Agreements; (d) what summative evaluations have been done concerning each of the following programs or policies, (i) the Aboriginal Labour Market Programs, (ii) Employment Insurance, (iii) Employment Measures, (iv) Labour Market Agreements; (e) who are the target clients for each of the following policies or programs, (i) the Aboriginal Labour Market Programs, (ii) Employment Insurance, (iii) Employment Measures, (iv) Labour Market Agreements; and (f) what were the reviews or audits done annually since 2000 of (i) the Aboriginal Labour Market Programs, (ii) Employment Insurance, (iii) Employment Measures, (iv) Labour Market Agreements?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 397—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:**

With regard to all gifts and benefits accepted, directly or indirectly, by the Prime Minister, all Cabinet Ministers, and their families since 2006, by first and last name of the Member, in chronological order: (a) for each gift or benefit received, (i) what was the date of receipt, (ii) what is the description of the occasion, (iii) what was the content, (iv) what was the estimated monetary value; (b) what are all gifts or benefits that were not forfeited to Her Majesty by the date of December 7, 2011, and, for each such gift or benefit, (i) what was the date of receipt, (ii) what was the content, (iii) what was the monetary value; (c) what are all gifts and benefits forfeited to Her Majesty by the date of December 7, 2011, and, for each such gift or benefit, (i) what was the date of receipt, (ii) what was the date of forfeiture, (iii) what is its current location, (iv) what was the content, (v) what was the monetary value; and (d) what is the policy for recipients regarding which gifts are kept and which are forfeited?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 398—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:**

With regard to the costs incurred by the government in settling lawsuits or claims, as identified in the 2011 Public Accounts totaling \$654 million, divided by department, what are the: (a) identities of the claimants or organizations; (b) details of the grievance including the (i) times, (ii) location(s), (iii) type(s), (iv) nature of dispute; (c) monetary amounts and any other terms requested in the claimant's initial claim or lawsuit; (d) subsequent government responses including (i) monetary offers, (ii) any other terms; (e) dates of settlement agreements; (f) types of settlements; (g) amounts of the settlements, and all other terms agreed to in the settlements; (h) the amounts that have been paid by the date of December 7, 2011; (i) estimated costs of not settling and using judicial channels; (j) names of government employees involved in the settlements and their role; (k) Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) hours spent on each claim's settlement; (l) legal fees incurred by the government (including those, if applicable, of the claimant) in each claim's settlement; and (m) steps taken to ensure the events leading to the lawsuit or claim are not repeated and any further lawsuits or claims are mitigated?

(Return tabled)

## Government Orders

Question No. 399—**Mr. Andrew Cash:**

With regard to applications made under the Toronto G20 Summit compensation fund: (a) what is the total number of applications made under the Toronto G20 Summit compensation fund by (i) individuals, (ii) businesses, (iii) non-profit organizations, (iv) other groups; (b) what is the total number of applications in (a) that were deemed eligible for compensation; (c) what is the total number of applications in (a) that were deemed ineligible for compensation; (d) what are the names and addresses of all applicants in (a); (e) for each individual application in (a), (i) what were the claim amounts submitted, (ii) what were the revised claim amounts, (iii) what were the amounts offered by Audit Service Canada as payment, (iv) what are the reasons for any variations in the amounts in (e)(i), (e)(ii) and (e)(iii); (f) what type of appeal process was or is in place for applicants who were not satisfied with the result of their application; and (g) what was done with the remaining money that was set aside for compensation but not awarded to applicants?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 400—**Ms. Charmaine Borg:**

With respect to the conditions inside federal penitentiaries for correctional officers and inmates: (a) will the government implement any of the 71 recommendations produced in the 2010 Report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security entitled “Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Addiction in the Federal Correctional System” and, if so, which ones; (b) will the government implement any of the 71 recommendations produced by the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) in its 36th Annual Report to Parliament (2008-2009) and, if so, which ones; (c) what is the government’s plan to address current and future levels of prison overcrowding; (d) does the government anticipate an increase in prison population by 2015 resulting from the enactment of Bill C-10, An Act to enact the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other Acts, and how will this factor into the aforementioned plan to address current levels of prison overcrowding; (e) does the Correctional Service of Canada have a plan to address the double-bunking crisis in Regional Treatment Centres and Regional Reception Centres; (f) what is the government’s response to reports regarding the practice of double-bunking in segregation; (g) does prison overcrowding have a role to play in the increasing rates of violence in federal prisons; (h) what have been the measurable results of the two-year, \$21.5 million investment initiated in 2007 and the continued yearly \$16.6 million investment into Institutional Mental Health Initiative (IMHI) intended to improve mental health programs in prisons, (i) have the investments measurably improved mental health treatment and intervention services, (ii) to what extent have the Primary Mental Health Care teams addressed the mental health needs of inmates, (iii) will any of the IMHI investment be directed towards the Intermediate Care Units to treat offenders with mental illnesses not admitted to Regional Treatment Centres, (iv) will an accountability framework and needs and gaps analysis be applied to the IMHI investment, (v) has an evaluation been conducted on the effectiveness of the two-day mental health training package delivered to correctional officers, (vi) will the IMHI investment meet the growing mental health services demands based on projected growth in the incarcerated population; (j) will the government increase CSC correctional programming funding above the current level of 2.7 percent of the total CSC budget and increase the percentage of health professionals on the CSC staff above the current level of 3.7 percent; and (j) to address the current overrepresentation of the mentally ill and the addicted in the correctional system and the security concerns this creates for correctional officers, will the government commit to, in collaboration with the provinces, investing in upstream interventions in order to stem the flow of people suffering from mental illnesses and addictions into the correctional system?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 402—**Hon. Hedy Fry:**

With respect to Aboriginal Canadians, for each year since 2006: (a) how many Aboriginal Canadians have been hired by each government department, agency and crown corporation as full-time employees and how many of them were women; and (b) how many Aboriginal Canadians have been promoted by each government department, agency and crown corporation to a management position and how many of them were women?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 403—**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:**

With regard to termination of employment agreements of exempt staff in Ministers’ offices since 2008: (a) how many employees in each Minister’s office have been terminated for misconduct or incompetence; (b) in aggregate, what was the total sum of severance paid out to these employees; (c) what was the average, median and highest amount of severance paid to a single terminated employee; (d) how many employees resigned but still received severance pay; and (e) out the subset of employees who resigned but still received severance pay, what was the average, median and maximum termination settlement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 404—**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:**

With regard to the purchase of cosmetics by Ministers’ offices since 2008: (a) how much money has each Minister’s office spent on (i) cosmetics, (ii) hair products, (iii) beauty supplies; (b) what were the dates of each purchase; and (c) what were the brands and names of the individual products purchased?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 405—**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:**

With regard to Ministers’ office budgets since 2008: (a) how many expense claims were submitted by the Minister or his or her exempt staff, but rejected by the relevant financial officer; (b) what was each rejected claim for and for what amount; and (c) what was the reason for each expense claim rejection?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**POOLED REGISTERED PENSION PLANS ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-25, An Act relating to pooled registered pension plans and making related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** Five minutes remain for questions and comments following the speech by the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard.

Are there any questions or comments?

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Vancouver East.

[English]

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-25, which is the pooled registered pension plans.

I will begin by commenting on the remarks made by the Minister of State for Finance during the debate earlier this morning and again in question period in response to one of his own member’s questions on this bill. He said that they were doing a great job on pensions and helping seniors. I was surprised to hear the minister of state say that Bill C-25 would be accessible. He kept stressing that it would be accessible.

*Government Orders*

When we look at the bill and the proposal the Conservatives have, there is absolutely nothing accessible about it. How can something be accessible when one cannot afford it? How can something be accessible when to go ahead with this kind of savings scheme would be to put one's money at risk in very volatile markets? How can it be accessible to the 1.6 million seniors who are considered to be living in poverty, as estimated by the Canadian Labour Congress? I was very surprised to hear the Conservatives describe this proposal as something that is accessible.

I was further surprised when the minister of state remarked that currently in the RRSP plan there is, I think he said, \$600 billion room for people to make contributions into RRSPs and that this would be a great opportunity to do that. Surely that begs the question as to why Canadians are not taking up what already exists under RRSPs if there is \$600 billion tax room available that they could use individually. The answer is that most Canadians cannot afford to make RRSP contributions or, if they can, they are concerned about the security of their money, whether it is in various kinds of stocks, mutual funds and so on. Therefore, they have not been taking up that so-called room in RRSPs.

• (1525)

Mr. Speaker, getting back to Bill C-25, I want to make it clear that this so-called pooled registered pension plan would not guarantee an actual pension. There is also no guarantee about how much money would be left when people retire if they had been able to afford to put money into such a plan.

As we read through the legislation, it becomes clear that the risks of such a plan are borne entirely by the individual who is making the contribution, as well as the employer, if he or she decided to make a contribution.

We should also be aware that this so-called pension plan that has "accessibility" would be managed by for-profit financial institutions, like banks, insurance companies and trust companies. There would be no caps on administration fees or costs.

This so-called plan, which is no plan at all, from the Conservative government would push people into the marketplace. It is basically saying that if people can afford it they fend for themselves. That is the basis of the government's plan here today.

We should be very clear that this proposal would not require matching contributions from employers. It also encourages hard-working Canadians to basically gamble on failing stock markets.

I find it quite incredible that, on the basis of public policy, a government would come forward with this proposal and say that it is the answer to the severe pension problems we have. It wants to just shuffle everybody off and tell them to go in the marketplace and see if it will fix it for them.

We know that is clearly not the case. For everybody who watched their RRSPs plummet over the past year or so, they know how risky it is to have their savings tied to the stock market and how risky it is for their retirement.

I also want to illuminate the bigger picture. We heard the Prime Minister's speech in Davos, Switzerland, last Thursday about a fix

for a generation, which he mentioned several times. I would say that it is more like a rip-off for generations to come.

One of the cores of that speech was his musings about how the Conservatives would tackle something that is very basic to Canadians, which is our old age security system. I find it quite reprehensible that we have a government that could make clear choices about economic performance and about how tax revenue is collected and where tax revenue goes and yet it has made clear choices and had the gall to announce those choices in Switzerland to a bunch of billionaires. The government did not even have the guts to be in Canada to roll out its plans. It did not have the guts to say it in the election.

We have a government, as we learned from the Davos speech, the "fix it for a generation" speech, that now plans to take aim at the old age security system and our pension system. The opening shot is the proposal that we have here today.

By contrast, the NDP has done an enormous amount of work studying, researching and analyzing what does need to be done to ensure pension security for Canadians who are already in retirement or Canadians who are planning to retire and are quickly approaching that age.

I want to pay tribute and thank the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek for the amazing work he has done in bringing this issue forward. He has very doggedly, time after time, whether it is in question period, in bills he has proposed for the NDP and brought forward in the House, in the forums he has held across the country or in speaking with seniors organizations, made it clear on our behalf, on something that we all support, that the NDP has brought forward a very comprehensive plan for retirement income security.

We would not leave people out in the cold. We would not leave people to the vagaries of the marketplace. We would not say to people that they might have to get a bit older before they can collect their old age security. Our plan is based on income retirement security that is fair, equitable and, most important, affordable.

• (1530)

The member outlined earlier this morning the plan that works in our country, and that is the Canada pension plan and the Quebec pension plan. We would increase it to a maximum of \$1,920 a month. We would ensure that it would be sustainable and that Canadians would get a fair and decent retirement pension.

We would also amend the bankruptcy legislation to ensure that pensioners and long-term disability recipients would be at the front of the line, not the end of it, of creditors when their employers entered court protection to declare bankruptcy. How many cases have we heard in the House of seniors who have worked hard over the years and paid into their pension plans only to see them go up in smoke because of bankruptcy proceedings? They found out that they were at the very bottom when it came to seeing some justice from the system such as it exists now. We have put forward legislation to correct that situation.



*Government Orders*

Finally, we have made it very clear that we would increase the guaranteed income supplement, the GIS, to a sufficient level of about \$700 million a year to lift every senior out of poverty in Canada immediately. Again, this is something that is affordable, realistic and it is the right kind of public policy decision to make at this time.

In debating the legislation today, we have to be very clear that we have a Conservative government that likes to make announcements in front of its billionaire elite supporters in Davos, Switzerland. It likes to put forward proposals that drive people into a marketplace situation, saying that they should go out there and fend for themselves, but if their savings get wrapped up in some kind of volatile market and they lose it, that it is not its problem.

That is not our approach. We do not want to see income inequality grow in our country. What was announced at Davos was nothing more than a further step to huge corporate interests such as we have seen with the corporate tax cuts. We have to be very clear for Canadians that there is an alternative. We do not have to be driven by this kind of agenda. I hope Bill C-25 is the beginning of a massive campaign to show that Canadians will not allow their pension system to be tampered with.

Other prime ministers have tried to do this. Other Liberal and Conservative prime ministers tried to get in there and make changes and they heard the wrath of Canadian seniors, who are a very organized group. I hope today the bill will be the first opportunity to mount a campaign as to what we see as an attack on public services, on our public pension system and on seniors who are some of the most vulnerable in our society.

We have to say no to the idea that it is just about the marketplace and yes to sound public policy decisions that are fair, equitable and affordable. That is what the NDP has put forward.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member easily criticizes the government in relation to what our proposed plan is, or what she expects it to be. I am curious as to what the NDP plan would be. We have heard the NDP continuously suggest spending and more spending, billions upon billions of dollars.

Where will that money would come from? Sooner or later it has to come from somewhere and somebody has to pay the bill. What is her suggestion relating to the large demographic we have? It looks like by 2030 there will be three times the yearly expense for these program. What proposal is her party coming forward with in this regard? It is spending more money. Sooner or later somebody has to pay for it. Who is going to pay for it?

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer that question because it gives me an opportunity to bring forward very solid information about how the NDP has proposed that we pay for something like raising the GIS.

I will begin with January 1. This year alone we will see a corporate tax cut of \$3 billion. I forget the exact number, but I think we have had over \$60 billion since 2004 in corporate tax cuts. The loss of public revenue that the Conservatives have perpetuated and brought forward is driving their agenda and they are now saying that we have to have cuts. We know that it is about looking at where the revenue comes from and where the expenditures go.

All the proposals that the NDP have made for pension reform that would produce better access, fairness and be more equitable are based on affordability and on an ability to pay. Our tax system should be based on ability to pay. It should be progressive. The idea that we can just shave off the top and say that the bigger one is the less one has to pay is wrong. That is what is robbing our system and driving these cuts. We have to stand up to that, as I think Canadians will, and say that it is completely unacceptable.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Vancouver East. I know her social democratic convictions. She explained quite well in her speech the problem with the program we are currently discussing. I would like her to say a few words about the current situation with women in their golden years.

[*English*]

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that women face a disproportionate share of living below the poverty line. Many women worked but they did not necessarily contribute to the Canada pension plan. Therefore, the whole issue of unpaid work or wages is very big. There is a huge gender difference in terms of income equality in our country.

The government's proposal is just really pie in the sky in terms of telling people to go out and have a ball, invest money in stocks and in their own plan. It completely misses the point in terms of the tens of thousands of women who survive on old age security and the guaranteed income supplement and who maybe made contributions to the Canada pension plan.

The previous Liberal government supposedly said that there should be gender analysis of legislation, although it really did not seem to live up to that. That kind of thing has now gone completely by the wayside. It really requires that kind of examination because it would then show that seniors who are women are having a much more difficult time.

This brings me back to the point that it is just so reprehensible that we have a Prime Minister at a conference in Switzerland musing about his big agenda, which I think most people find incredibly scary. Our job here is to ensure he does not get away with it.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to add my voice in support of today's debate on pensions and retirement income security.

I have been a small business owner in Canada for 20 years. I have also worked for larger corporations. Therefore, I think I should have some knowledge of retirement and what it means.

*Government Orders*

Contrary to what the hon. members of the NDP may choose to believe, our government continues to work with all stakeholders to improve the security of retirement benefits in Canada. Promoting the retirement income security of Canadians is an important goal of the Government of Canada. We will continue to ensure that our policies, programs and services meet the evolving needs of Canada's workforce and retirees. We recognize the contribution seniors have made, and continue to make, to our nation.

In the wake of economic shocks from beyond our borders, Canadians are concerned about the long-term viability of their pension plans. We are listening to their views on how we can leverage Canada's financial sector advantage to strengthen the security of pension plan benefits and ensure the framework is balanced and appropriate. We are working toward a permanent, long-term solution to protect the pensions of Canadians.

In our effort toward greater retirement security for Canadians, our government is building on the inroads already made to strengthen the framework by federally-regulated private pension plans.

In 2009 we consulted Canadians from coast to coast on these earlier initiatives and subsequently introduced a number of significant changes based on the advice of individual Canadians. Our action included ensuring that an employer fully fund benefits if the pension plan was terminated.

Since taking office in 2006, our government has also introduced several important improvements to the tax rules for registered pension plans, that is RPPs, and registered retirement savings plans, also known as RRSPs. For example, the age limit for converting RPP and RRSP savings into a retirement income vehicle was increased to 71, from 69. Changes were introduced to allow more flexible phased retirement arrangements under a defined benefit RPP. The surplus threshold above which employer contributions to a defined benefit RPP must be suspended was increased to 25%, from 10%.

Let us talk about the pooled registered pension plans.

These private pensions plans already benefit from Canada having one of the soundest financial sectors in the world. With Bill C-25, our government would harness this advantage and further strengthen Canada's retirement income system.

Similar to my colleagues on this side of the House who have already spoken on the subject, let me say that pooled registered pension plans, or PRPPs, would mark a significant step forward in advancing our retirement income agenda and would be a vital improvement to Canada's retirement income system.

The emergence of the PRPPs is the culmination of a journey that began in December 2010, when Canada's finance ministers agreed on a framework for the introduction of PRPPs. This collective approach was taken because PRPPs were considered the most effective and appropriate way to target those modest and middle-income individuals who might not be saving enough for their retirement, in particular, those who currently do not have access to an employer-sponsored RPP, registered pension plan.

There are a number of factors that contributed to this decision by the finance ministers, including declining participation in employer-

sponsored RPPs. The proportion of working Canadians with such plans has declined from 41% in 1991 to 34% in 2007.

Some Canadians may also be failing to take full advantage of the discretionary savings opportunities offered to them through individual structures like the RRSPs. Participation in RRSPs reached a peak of 45% of the labour force in 1997, before levelling off to 39% in 2008.

While aggregate RPP/RRSP participation rates for middle and higher-income earners are quite high, research nevertheless indicates that a portion of Canadians may not be saving enough.

PRPPs would address this gap in the retirement income system by providing a new, accessible, large scale and low cost defined contribution pension option to employers, employees and the self-employed. They would allow individuals who currently may not participate in an employer-sponsored pension plan, such as the self-employed and employees of companies that do not offer a pension plan, to make use of this new option.

● (1540)

This is especially important for millions of small business owners and their employees, who will now have access to large-scale, low-cost pension plans for the very first time, with professional administrators working to ensure that funds are invested in the best interests of the members.

Since these plans will involve large pooled funds, plan members will benefit from the lower investment management costs associated with the scale of these funds. Essentially, they will buy in bulk.

This sentiment is echoed by Dan Kelly, the senior vice-president of legislative affairs for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, who believes that PRPPs will help deliver on the promise of a lower cost alternative for small business owners and that the pooled feature should allow lower costs than traditional pensions as there will be a much larger group in the pension vehicle than in traditional arrangements.

Similarly, the president of the Canadian Bankers Association, Terry Campbell, agrees that:

PRPPs will make it possible for small and medium-sized businesses to offer to their employees registered pension plans that will be simple to administer. As well, PRPPs will allow self-employed individuals to participate in private sector pension plans for the first time.

The design of these plans will be straightforward. They are intended to be largely harmonized from province to province, which will also facilitate lower administrative costs and portability. These features will remove barriers that might have kept some employers in the past from offering pension plans to their employees and that prevented employees and self-employed individuals from participating in large-scale pension plans.

Moving forward, we understand that Canadians want their governments to work together to deliver results for them, and the PRPP is a prime example of what we can accomplish for Canadians when we do.

*Government Orders*

The bill before us today, the PRPP act, represents the federal portion of the PRPP framework and is a major step forward in implementing PRPPs.

In addition, the tax rules for PRPPs have been developed by the Government of Canada and were released in draft form for comment on December 14, 2011. The tax rules for PRPPs will apply to both federally and provincially regulated PRPPs.

Once the provinces put in place their PRPP legislation, the legislative and regulatory framework for PRPPs will be operational, thereby allowing PRPP administrators to develop and offer plans to Canadians and their employers.

As Frank Swedlove, the president of the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association, stated:

[the PRPP] is a great opportunity to make a fundamental difference in the landscape for pensions in Canada and we hope the legislation reflects that opportunity.

Once implemented, PRPPs will be a key element of the third pillar of Canada's retirement income system, which provides tax-assisted vehicles to help and encourage Canadians to accumulate private savings for retirement. PRPPs will complement and operate alongside RRSPs and employer-sponsored RPPs.

As I noted at the outset, we have already taken significant action to strengthen the existing elements of this pillar, like RPPs and RRSPs.

RPPs are sponsored by employers on a voluntary basis and can be either defined contribution or defined benefit plans, with employers, and often employees, responsible for making contributions.

RRSPs are voluntary, individual, defined contribution savings plans. Employers may provide a group RRSP for employees and may remit a share of contributions on behalf of their employees.

Contributions to RPPs and RRSPs are deductible for income tax purposes, and investment income earned in these plans is not subject to income tax. Pension payments and withdrawals are included in income and are taxed at regular rates.

The cost of tax assistance provided on retirement savings is currently estimated at approximately \$25 billion per year in foregone revenue for the federal government, and about one-half that amount in foregone provincial revenue.

Of course, tax-assisted private savings works hand in hand with the other pillars of Canada's retirement income support system. That includes the old age security, OAS, and guaranteed income supplement, GIS, programs, which provide a basic minimum income guarantee for seniors; and the Canada pension plan, CPP, and the Quebec pension plan, QPP. These are mandatory public targeted benefit pension plans that provide a basic level of earnings replacement for all Canadian workers.

• (1545)

We have a solid and inclusive system, but our government is continually looking for ways to improve it. The road ahead will likely include more discussion between Canadians and government at all levels. As these issues are complex, we cannot force a decision without understanding the long-term implications for both Canadians

and the Canadian economy. We need to get this right, and so far I firmly believe we have.

Over the past two years, our government's commitment to a stronger system has taken my colleague, the Minister of State for Finance, to communities across the country, consulting with Canadians, engaging in challenging the opposition parties in constructive dialogue, discussing key considerations with business and labour groups and receiving valuable input from some of the most respected experts in the retirement income field.

Passage of this legislation being debated today will mean that we have made real progress as a result of these efforts. It is not just the Government of Canada that understands this. B.C. finance minister Kevin Falcon recently stated:

The province supports an initiative where people currently without occupational pension plans are able to take advantage of a low-cost option.

Working together, I am confident we can get these important new retirement vehicles up and running for Canadians in a timely manner. We have the support. According to Tom Reid, senior vice-president of group retirement services at Sun Life Financial,:

The PRPP legislation is an important, much-needed and well-targeted reform to Canada's retirement system. It reflects an equitable balance of responsibility among individuals, employers and government that is key to the success and sustainability of our world-class pension system.

In addition, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's federal and Ontario director Gregory Thomas called the PRPP legislation good for Canadians planning for retirement and for taxpayers. He stated:

Canadians will be able to save more for retirement with this new pension plan. People saving for retirement will enjoy lower costs and more flexibility throughout their working lives.

Through the cross-country consultations, Canadians made it clear that this is an issue too important to get wrong. While our government is determined to make it even better, I should stress that Canada's retirement income system has already been recognized around the world by experts like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD, as a model that succeeds in reducing poverty among Canadian seniors and providing high levels of replacement income for retired workers.

While the OECD has reported that the Canadian poverty rate in the mid-2000s among seniors was at 4.4%, one of the lowest rates in the OECD compared to the OECD average of 13.3%, the poverty rate is defined as 50% of the medium income in our country. The average income of Canadians aged 65 years or over is about 90% of the average income of all Canadians, which is the third highest of selected OECD countries.

Canada's seniors have worked hard to build a better country for future generations and today's workers should be given every chance to follow in their footsteps. Our record shows that our government is committed to the financial well-being of Canadian seniors, as well as many Canadians who are currently still working to realize their retirement dreams. They deserve not only our respect but also our support to allow them to enjoy their later years after a lifetime of contributing to our society.

*Government Orders*

The PRPP is the latest in a range of government measures providing them with just the support they need. I would therefore encourage all members of the House to vote in favour of this bill and join the government in building an even stronger retirement income system for the future.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. member opposite. The government has presented a lot of half measures since the beginning of the session in September, and even in June. There are many small businesses and self-employed workers in my riding. When they heard about this bill, they were excited at first. However, when they read the bill, they realized it was a savings plan and not a pension plan or a retirement plan. It is a savings plan, like the one for students.

How does this government expect low-income individuals to put money aside, as this program requires? It is not a solution. It is a half measure.

[*English*]

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Mr. Speaker, there are no half measures. A pension plan is a pension plan. It provides an option for the employee to contribute to a plan that will grow in the absence of taxes on capital gains or income. Therefore, it is essentially a deferral of income from the savings. There is an array of things and this government is providing the employee a choice. There is the CPP and the RRSP. Those who are lucky enough to be employed by a company that provides a registered pension plan will have that, too. However, keep in mind that some plans are not portable, with the exception of the RRSP, which is a self-funded plan. This pooled pension plan would be portable, universal and an additional vehicle for the employee to have a choice.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal Party look at retirement as an issue with many different facets. The biggest and most important issue of concern to Canadians is the guaranteed income supplement, and so forth. Following the Prime Minister's recent comments on increasing the age from 65 to 67, to putting in freezes, to the possibility of having cutbacks, there are discussions taking place today throughout Canada as seniors try to understand what the Conservatives' hidden agenda really is in regard to the whole government pension program.

I am wondering if the member would be able to provide some clear and concise commitments that would assure Canadians from coast to coast that those pensions and the amounts and the age at which people are eligible to receive pensions, that is, at age 65, will continue under the present government. Is he prepared to make that commitment?

• (1555)

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Mr. Speaker, we are still in a period of consultation on this.

For retirement a senior has to rely on an array of things. The OAS and the GIS and the CPP are government programs that we have inherited. We are trying to provide a better array of savings plans, including the tax-free savings account plus the proposed new pooled pension plan, to allow them greater options to save for their future.

Probably one of the best pension plans for an individual is to invest in their own principal residence, but that is only one aspect of it.

Canadians are financially savvy and financially literate, and it would be a bonus to them to have these options to choose how they wish to retire.

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has established himself already as a well-known member of Parliament. He has gone across the country and has even been working internationally. Many of us, including me, knew him well before in his role as a prominent businessperson both in Canada and abroad.

I am wondering if he could put on his businessperson's hat for a second and give us a sound commercial analysis on why this approach would make sense for Canadians.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country for his accolades.

I have done business both in Canada and internationally. From the employer's standpoint, in order to provide working income for staff and to expand the company's market and to make sure that the business is a going concern, there are a number of factors contributing to that. First is a stable environment, and second a low cost tax regime, and third the ability to access capital. From that base the employer then builds a business.

Employees are key to any corporation. Money is easy to borrow. Employers never exploit their employees, at least not in the five or seven companies that I have built, so it is key that we ensure that we retain those employees. To retain those employees we need to offer them the employment security they need in order to work for a long time in our corporations.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back to something that the member opposite touched on when he spoke about the shared responsibility of employees, employers and the government, and the viability of the PRPP system being proposed by the Conservatives.

We find this system to be completely disconnected from reality for a number of reasons, mainly because the risks would be borne only by employees. They are being offered a plan that would produce results based on the market. We hope that the investment income will grow. However, we know that Australia introduced this type of plan and realized, 12 years later, that the plan was completely ineffective because management fees were too high and inflation was almost as great as income. This plan does not provide any guarantee that investments will grow in the end.

If all the risks are borne by employees, what responsibility will the government and employers have?

*Government Orders*

• (1600)

[English]

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Mr. Speaker, the government is providing three pillars in the retirement system for employees, those who are approaching retirement. There is the government portion, which is the traditional CPP-QPP, OAS and GIS. Then there is the individual portion which is the RRSP, and there are those who belong to a larger corporation. Only about 30% or 40% of Canada's population have those plans. That is the RPP.

We are providing another portion for those who are in small and medium size businesses which traditionally cannot go to a financial institution for a plan, because they only have three to five employees. For example, people in a private practice, such as lawyers, accountants, doctors, plumbers and restaurant owners do not have the ability to entice financial institutions to set up a registered pension plan.

With this pooled pension plan, the investment aspect is regulated to prevent the failures of the market of over-zealous managers. At the same time I think the costs will be pooled in such a way to manage it at a reasonable cost. Most of the pension plan costs run somewhere around 1% and 2%. That is a very reasonable cost.

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the indulgence of the House to split my time with the member for Hamilton Mountain.

Mr. Speaker, it is important when addressing Bill C-25 that we set it in the context of what is being attempted here by the government and what is needed with regard to pension reform in this country. It is not only important to do that in terms of the historical context but also in the context of relativity to other jurisdictions and other nations.

In that regard, it is important to understand historically where we have come over the last 50 or 60 years with respect to government pensions or pensions partially contributed to by government. We have established a regime in that regard. We could study some of the reports and minutes of meetings issued during that period of time when the CPP was being established. It was quite clear at that time that an understanding was entered into that the CPP and the QPP which came after, would provide roughly 25% to 30% of what was needed to retire in dignity, and the rest would be provided by the private sector. At age 65, old age security would kick in and that would help to offset the balance. That is where it came from.

If we study that historically right up to the present time, another mechanism that was there, other than private pension plans, is the RSP. It has been a substantial failure in providing that level of security because of its lack of ability to attract enough funds and the inability of most Canadians to contribute significantly enough to an RSP in order to retire in dignity, that combined with the CPP and old age security.

That left the pension plans. As we have heard repeatedly this afternoon, and I am sure as this debate goes on we will hear it a number of times, there are too many Canadians who do not have access to private pension plans. We are at a stage in our history where the system is in need of major reform.

I will compare our status in this area with that of other countries. Across the border in the United States, its social security provides roughly \$30,000 a year in Canadian dollars. The full amount of our CPP including the full OAS provides maybe \$18,000 or \$19,000. That is the context in which we are functioning.

Again, the vast majority of Canadians who are not covered by private pension plans have no ability to make that up and have to rely on RSPs.

What does the government do? Rather than looking at other alternatives, which I will come back to in a moment, it wants to continue with this mostly failed plan of RSPs but turn it into a pooled RSP. This is not just us talking. Even conservative think-tanks like the Fraser Institute have basically said this will not work. There is a list of reasons why it will not work. Let us start with the contributions.

There has been a committee functioning in my riding for what will be three years in May. It is looking at the need for pension reforms. Some members are from unions and others are from the private sector. They have been doing an analysis of what is needed in the way of reform. They have looked at this and have said that it will not move any significant additional dollars or people into the category of being able to retire with dignity in terms of their economic status and economic ability to pay their basic costs of living.

• (1605)

The reason for that is if people have the ability to contribute now, they are contributing to an RSP. Thirty-one per cent contribute and depending on the economic conditions in the country at the time, somewhere between 3% and 7% of that 31% contribute the full amount. The doctor or lawyer doing well financially will contribute the full amount. Even most people within the professions do not.

This begs the question, if they are not able to do that with their own RSPs which they control, why would they put it into this pooled plan where they are going to have to pay very substantial fees? This bill does absolutely nothing to control the amount the people accepting this money, anywhere in the financial sector, can charge in fees.

It is important at this point to juxtapose the reality of what we have seen in a number of these types of investments, the stock market, bonds, whatever, where there is a financial adviser controlling those funds. We have seen that the ratios of the fees are five to six times the fees and administrative costs for the Canada pension plan. That is the reality in Canada today.

Quite frankly, this one is so unattractive that the cost will probably be even higher, because it is so unattractive for a major financial agency, a bank or insurance company, to get into this market. The administrative costs are going to be extremely high because of the low participation. We are going to see huge fees, and this bill does nothing to address that issue.

*Government Orders*

Another point to look at is when it is that small investor who has some ability to put money aside in an RSP, it begs the question why the investor would do that after what we just saw happen in 2008. We can go back to the high-tech bubble of the late 1990s and any number of times I have watched this happen.

Why would people trust their money going into this pool where there are very few regulations when we have seen what has happened in the U.S. with the housing bubble burst and all of what we have found out as to how funds were handled in that regard? Why would people even consider, if they have these funds, putting them into a pooled registered pension plan as opposed to maintaining control and deciding how best their money could work for them?

For those reasons, it is simply not going to be of any use whatsoever. Bill C-25 is a smokescreen. The government wants to try to convince Canadians that the reform which is so badly needed in our pension system, whatever source there is, is being handled by this one plan, and it is not. It is not at all. It is not going to work.

Let us look at the alternatives for a minute. The expansion of the CPP is clearly one of the routes to go. I heard the last speaker for the Conservatives talk about the stability of the CPP and its ability to deliver and that it is not available for the small merchant. That is one of the reforms that is necessary. We could do that. There are very clear proposals that have come from a number of groups over the last two to three years about how to reform the CPP to attract those people, to give them access to the CPP. It is an expansion of it. The administrators of it say it is possible to be done.

That is only one example of what could be done. I see my time is just about up. There are other reforms that need to be made with regard to the CPP. For instance, priority under the bankruptcy legislation needs to be given to pension funds. The OAS needs to be increased as opposed to what we are hearing, that the government is going to take away benefits by increasing the age. The GIS that needs to be addressed as well.

There are plans out there that are obviously better than this bill which is a smokescreen and should be defeated.

• (1610)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before we go to questions, 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 Sudbury, Consumer Protection; the hon. member for Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and the hon. member for Windsor West, Canada-U.S. Relations.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member for Windsor—Tecumseh. He is an extremely intelligent person in many respects. However, there are some considerations that I would ask the member to take a very close look at.

We will have more senior citizens than young people within approximately three years. That is what the demographics are showing. The number of Canadians over the age of 65 will increase from 4.7 million to 9.3 million over the next 20 years.

Listening to the parliamentary secretary and to the speakers who have stood on this side of the House, let us be clear, there will be no

changes to the benefits seniors currently receive and any changes that are made would have a substantial notice and adjustment period.

As I listened to the member's speech, with the aging demographic, we also have less workers working toward those taxes. Is it not important to ensure that the OAS continues, but also that we look at the whole program to ensure that we have these very important programs sustained in Canada, not for 5, 10 or 15 years, but for the next 60 years?

• (1615)

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Mr. Speaker, the question of the member for Kildonan—St. Paul gives me the opportunity to raise the issue of the sustainability of the OAS.

Nothing has changed with regard to the sustainability of the OAS from where it first started to where it is now. This has always been carried by current funds. We have never had a reserve fund for the OAS in the history of it. What has changed with regard to the revenues that are coming in is the government has consistently said that it will give preference in the economy to certain groups and it will give large corporations major tax breaks. There have been over \$100 billion so far and it will almost double before those tax breaks are finished.

If we take that out of the accounting column, on one side the expenses are continuing, the OAS expenses are continuing, and we are lowering the revenues on the other side. That is where the sustainability problems come. It has nothing to do with OAS; it has everything to do with policy decisions by the government with regard to tax breaks for the big corporations.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could provide me some information in terms of the NDP policy. Whether it is the OAS, GICs, or CPP, all these are wonderful pension programs, we understand, in terms of where the Conservatives are coming from on this, which creates a great deal of concern, not only for Liberals but, I suspect, also for New Democrats and for the vast majority of Canadians.

Where I am a bit confused is in terms of what degree does the NDP, as a political entity, believe that an individual should be encouraged or the government should be providing any sort of incentive for individuals to participate in pension programs that go beyond those government programs, which in good part were formed by Liberal governments in the past.

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Mr. Speaker, most of our pension system came out of the CCF and the NDP proposals over the last approximately 80 years when we first started and were eventually picked up by other political parties and implemented.

With regard to the basic question, what he is asking is if people should plan for retirement and contribute to it. From any side of the House, we are all going to say, yes, we all should be doing that.

*Government Orders*

For those who are more vulnerable, those with disabilities, limited incomes, maybe a series of times when they were unemployed, there has to be a plan in place for government to be play a role there to assist them so they can retire in dignity because they have contributed to this society throughout that period of time. It is always a question of the details and to what degree, such as how much should government be doing, how much should the private sector be doing, how much should the individual be doing.

Bill C-25 does not address that in any realistically plausible way of being successful.

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to get a chance to rise in the House today to debate one of the most important issues of our times: pensions.

It is unfortunate that the Prime Minister and I fundamentally disagree about what those pensions ought to look like. In fact, judging by recent polling of seniors, there are not many Canadians who believe that the Prime Minister is on the right track when it comes to the income security of Canadian retirees. No wonder he waited until he was on the other side of the Atlantic to announce, in Davos, Switzerland of all places, that he would be cutting big chunks out of Canada's old age security system. So much for accountability to Canadians.

Thankfully, Canadian pensioners are much more savvy than the Prime Minister gives them credit for. They are not frail and disengaged. On the contrary, when it comes to their income security, they are ready to fight for what is right. After all, they have worked hard all their lives, they have played by the rules, but now everywhere they turn, every bill they open, they pay more and get less.

It is a well known fact that increases in the cost of living hit seniors disproportionately harder than any other segment of the population. When Statistics Canada determines the annual cost of living upon which adjustments are based, its basket of goods include electronics like iPods, plasma TVs and computers, which are all goods coming down in price and reducing the cost of living figures. However, they are also goods that seniors are not buying. The items they spend money on are essentials like heat, hydro, food and shelter, all of which are outpacing their incomes.

It is no wonder that the vast majority of Canadians are deeply worried about not having enough money to live on after retirement. They are worried about the solvency of their private pensions and the adequacy of both CPP and public income supports. Let us talk about each of those for a bit.

Record job losses, the decline of entire industries and the collapse of larger employers are throwing hundreds of thousands of hard-working Canadians out of work. Far too many bankrupt employers are leaving underfunded pension plans in their wake. Through no fault of their own, workers are now finding that despite their years of making pension contributions, they can no longer count on a secure workplace pension.

However, workplace pensions are just part of the problem because only one-third of Canadian workers have a workplace pension. Similarly, only one-third of Canadians contribute to an RRSP and

those who have just watched billions in precious savings vaporize in the stock market crash of this last recession.

The current system is leaving too many people without the retirement savings they need. There is too much at risk and not enough security. Let us face it, for more than a generation, wages have failed to keep pace with the cost of living and most Canadians have not been able to save what they need.

The urgent question before us today is this. What is the best way to help today's workers save enough money for tomorrow? The answer to that is clearly not to be found in the Prime Minister's speech in Davos.

In the past, Canadians came together during crisis to create solutions, to minimize risk by sharing it. That is what we did when we created public health care and, yes, that is what we did when we created public pensions. However, not under this Prime Minister. Instead of looking to opportunities to strengthen our pension system, he said that the demographic pressures from our aging population, "constitute a threat to the social programs and services that Canadians cherish". Instead of securing our pension system to ensure sustainable prosperity for seniors, he announced that he would limit spending on pension programs.

While no one is quite clear on what exactly he meant, there is a widespread belief that the Conservatives will raise the minimum age at which people become eligible for full old age security payments, from 65 to 67. However, what is clear from the same speech is that we can afford to ensure that Canadian seniors live in the dignity to which they are entitled. As the Prime Minister correctly pointed out in Switzerland, Canada is no Greece.

Government debt levels as a percentage of gross domestic product are low. The federal deficit is being reduced ahead of schedule. There is no fiscal crisis in our country. Funding OAS takes the equivalent of 2.4% of the GDP. It is among the lowest of OECD countries. Italy, by contrast, spends 14% of GDP on public pensions.

True, by 2031, as the wave of baby boomers reaches retirement age peaks, the OAS' share of GDP will increase to 3.14%, an increase of 0.73% of GDP from today's level. However, as UBC economics professor Kevin Milligan points out, an increase of 0.73% cannot be ignored, but neither is it disastrous. When the baby boomer bulge starts to recede, as it will from about 2020 on, spending on the elderly will start to decelerate on its own.

• (1620)

Clearly this attack on the OAS is nothing more than an ideological assault on public pensions. So what do we get instead? Pooled registered pension plans, the enabling legislation for which is before us in the House today.

*Government Orders*

Ostensibly designed to address the fact that modest and middle income households are at risk of under-saving for retirement, the Conservatives want to work with the provinces to create an option of pooled workplace pensions administered by financial institutions.

In other words, the Conservatives are encouraging families to gamble even more of their retirement savings on failing stock markets. It is a voluntary defined contribution plan that is run by wealthy financial institutions investing in tumbling markets. That uncertainty and volatility leaves families without any guarantees that their savings will be there for them when they retire.

As one critic of the bill so aptly put it, we must conclude that this is an agreement to do nothing except perhaps a handout to the financial services industry at the expense of the average Canadian.

Let us face it, we do not need to reinvent the wheel when it comes to pension security. We do not need Bill C-25. The best way to help today's worker save enough money for tomorrow is through an improved Canada pension plan. Over the next several years we must lay the foundation to double CPP benefits for the future.

The CPP has been proven time and again to be a safe, secure and efficient retirement savings plan. As the Prime Minister himself noted, the CPP is “fully funded and actuarially sound”. It is portable from job to job and across provinces. It keeps up with inflation and 93% of Canadians are already members.

Because the CPP operates independently from government, there is no cost to taxpayers. In fact, there is the potential for governments to save money over time.

Higher and more secure pension savings means seniors will be less likely to rely on income supports like the guaranteed income supplement or provincial and local social supports for medicine, housing and food.

The cost to workers and employers is manageable. Over seven years, CPP premiums would only have to rise by 0.4% each year of pensionable earnings.

We all need to save more for retirement and putting that little extra into the CPP makes more sense than investing in risky RRSPs, pooled or otherwise. It is safer, easier, in fact it is effortless, and it earns more.

It is time for the government to come clean. The Conservatives found \$9 billion for prisons. They found \$30 billion for fighter jets. They found \$6 billion for more corporate tax cuts. However, they say they cannot find the money to protect the pensions of Canadian seniors.

Clearly this is not about money; it is about choices. I choose to invest in people. I choose to stand up for Canadian seniors and for retirement with dignity and respect.

•(1625)

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would agree that this is about protecting seniors. This is about dignity and respect. Clearly our side of the House has made it quite clear there would be no changes to the benefits that seniors currently receive. Very substantial notice would be given to any changes that

would be made and an adjustment period, which would not reflect upon retirees or those close to retirement.

In actual fact, our government has shown a great deal of responsibility by projecting into the future. To do that, we have to ensure that these very special programs like CPP and OAS remain strong in our country.

With the aging demographic and with the change in the demographic in the country, we have to ensure that needs of seniors are met. It is about doing things in a balanced way that would ensure the future.

I would like to ask the member a question about some of her comments. How does she intend to have this balance maintained in our country if we do not look at these pension plans and do the right thing?

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is fairly simple. The right thing to do is to invest in seniors instead of investing in megaprisons that we do not need and fighter jets that do not work. This is about choices.

The member says that that would not impact the people who are currently seniors. Oh, really? I do not think we have seen any of that before in this House. We have not received any guarantees. Except for what some of the members were saying this afternoon, we have not heard any specifics. Even if that were true, the people who would be impacted are the very workers who today are losing their jobs in plants from coast to coast. Those workers are losing their workplace pensions because the government did not do its due diligence with respect to the Investment Canada Act, as was the case with Stelco when it was bought out by U.S. Steel. The workers there are now worried about their pensions. Workers at Vale are worried about their pensions.

I invite the member to go to London and talk to the folks working at Caterpillar. They are now worried about their pensions. They cannot count on their workplace pensions and now the government is telling them that they cannot count on their OAS pension either because it may be taking that away from them as well. If we do the math, that is taking \$12,000 away from the people who are counting on their public pensions to support them in their retirement.

I do not know how the member can stand in the House and say that she supports retirements with dignity and respect when the government is taking money away from hard-working Canadians and not allowing them to have the retirement they have earned.

•(1630)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for my colleague concerning her excellent speech. Various people have said that the program provided for in Bill C-25 would be adapted to local conditions, and that nothing else can be done with respect to the Canada pension plan.



*Government Orders*

There are a lot of optional programs available that offer financial and tax incentives, such as RRSPs, group RRSPs, TFSAs and so on. The government can increase CPP contributions for all Canadians, but when it comes to RRSPs, for example, only 30% of Canadians contribute. Despite tax incentives, 70% of Canadians do not have the means to invest. Forty per cent of Canadians invest in TFSAs, but half of those investors earn over \$100,000 per year. Very few Canadians earning less than \$100,000 have been motivated to invest.

Will the voluntary participation plan provided for in Bill C-25 solve the problem of the 12 million Canadians who do not have workplace pension plans?

[*English*]

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, by its very definition, a voluntary program will, obviously, not develop the same kind of sustainability and pool of pension funds that an excellent plan like the CPP has developed over time. That is one of the reasons that we are supporting the CPP as the best alternative for a public pension system to support retiring workers.

The member is absolutely right. We have the TFSA and RRSPs. Private retirement savings vehicles are already in place. We do not need pooled pension plans on top of that. The reason there is only 30% take-up is that people do not have money to put into these investment vehicles. Anybody in the House who has been following the news knows that we have been experiencing plant closure after plant closure. Decent paying jobs are lost in this country and are replaced by minimum wage jobs. People on minimum wage do not have money to put into TFSAs or RRSPs and they certainly do not care whether a pooled pension plan is created. They do not have the money to invest.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak in favour of Bill C-25, the pooled registered pension plans act. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Ensuring that hard-working Canadians can retire with dignity has been a top priority of this government since our election in 2006. I am proud to say that we have taken a number of initiatives to help Canadian seniors.

In 2009, we introduced a number of changes to the framework for federally regulated registered pension plans. Improvements included ensuring that an employer fully funds benefits if the pension plan is terminated and providing sponsors of defined benefit pension plans more funding flexibility.

Also in 2009, Canada's governments completed their mandated tri-annual review of the CPP, which modernized the plan to better reflect how Canadians currently live, work and retire.

Our government is delivering for seniors.

Just recently, the 2011 budget announced a new GIS top-up benefit for Canada's most vulnerable seniors. Seniors with little or no income are receiving additional annual benefits of up to \$600 for single seniors and \$840 for couples, benefiting 680,000 seniors across Canada.

We introduced the tax free savings account, a flexible, registered, general purpose savings vehicle that allows Canadians to earn tax

free investment to more easily meet their lifetime saving needs, including retirement savings.

We also provided \$2.3 billion in additional annual targeted tax relief to seniors and pensioners through measures such as pension income splitting, increases in the age credit amount and a doubling of the maximum amount of income eligible for the pension income credit.

There is much good news to report on the state of Canada's seniors. Among OECD countries, Canada has one of the lowest poverty rates among seniors, 4.4% compared to the OECD average of 13.3%. The disposable income of Canadians over the age of 65 is 90% of the average disposable income of other Canadians.

The problem we have today is that 60% of Canadians do not have a workplace pension plan. Addressing this issue has taken my colleague, the Minister of State for Finance, to communities across this country where he has been consulting with Canadians, meeting with our provincial and territorial counterparts, and discussing key considerations with small and medium-sized businesses.

As a result of these consultations, Canada's finance ministers agreed on a framework for the introduction of an innovative new private sector retirement savings vehicle, the pooled registered pension plan, or PRPP. This marks a significant step forward in advancing our retirement income agenda. It is the result of careful consideration and deliberation with the provinces and territories, key stakeholders and experts, and Canadians themselves.

I want to be clear. The move to create pooled registered pension plans was unanimous among the provinces and territories. The finance minister of my home province of British Columbia, the hon. Kevin Falcon, said:

British Columbia is of the view that pooled registered pension plans could be part of a package of reforms to make saving for retirement easier, more affordable and more secure for Canadians.

Quebec's minister of finance, the hon. Raymond Bachand, said:

The Government of Quebec welcomes the federal government's decision to quickly make changes to tax legislation to accommodate PRPPs. This announcement will allow us to fulfill our commitment made in the 2011–2012 budget to put in place new voluntary retirement savings plans.

What the province of Quebec does not support is higher CPP contributions from employees, employers and the self-employed as some members of the opposition have advocated. In fact, the minimum two-thirds agreement among provinces to expand the CPP could not be reached because, at a time of global economic uncertainty, such a plan would have put at risk thousands of jobs.

Let me tell the House who else supports our plan, and that is small and medium-sized businesses.

*Government Orders*

A Leger Marketing poll conducted for the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association found a majority of 800 small and medium-sized companies polled were supportive of the PRPP. Frank Swedlove, president of the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association, said:

These savvy employers know a good thing when they see it. Universal access will assure that all Canadian workers have an opportunity to save at the workplace.

● (1635)

There are many benefits to our pooled registered pension plan. First, our straightforward plan is accessible. It is an administratively low cost retirement option for employers to offer their employees. This would allow individuals who currently may not participate in a pension plan, such as the self-employed or employees of companies that do not offer a pension plan, to make use of this new type of pension plan.

Second, there is flexibility for both employee and employer. Companies can choose whether or not to participate in the plan, and early indications are that many will. Employers can choose to match their employee contributions either fully or partially. Employees can also choose to opt out. At the time of retirement, employees would have the same options available to defined contribution pension plan members. These include the purchase of a life annuity, transfer to an RRSP or a registered retirement income fund. Employees would also have the option to receive payments similar to RIF benefits from the employee's PRPP account.

Third, there is portability. Employees would be able to transfer their savings between PRPPs if they move from one job to another. Most workers will have several careers and work for a multiple number of employers. As they move from job to job, workers could continue to build for their retirement in confidence.

Our plan would fill the gap on the voluntary side of our retirement income system by providing millions of Canadians with access to a low cost pension arrangement for the very first time. The introduction of PRPPs marks a particularly significant advancement in supporting the retirement needs of small businesses and their employees who until now have not had access to the same private pension options.

PRPPs would also complement and support the Government of Canada's overarching objective of creating and sustaining jobs, leveraging business investment and securing our economic recovery in sustainable, private sector driven growth.

Some of the retirement income system proposals that we looked at in those consultations I talked about would have significantly raised costs for employers and employees. Introducing them would have been unacceptable during a very tentative economic recovery. PRPPs on the other hand would be efficiently managed, privately administered pension arrangements that would provide greater choice to employers and individuals, thereby promoting pension coverage and retirement savings.

Through numerous cross-country consultations, our government has talked to many Canadians and heard many challenging personal stories. Canadians have made it clear that this is an issue too important to get wrong. That is why we have devoted considerable effort on the retirement security issue in order to get it right. Our plan

has found unanimous support among the provinces and territories. It has wide support among small and medium-size businesses. It would help secure the retirement incomes of millions of Canadians who do not have a private pension plan.

I call on members opposite to join with our government, do the right thing for working Canadians and support the passage of Bill C-25.

● (1640)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in listening to the member, what comes to my mind is that many argue that there is a hidden agenda with the Conservative Party. It is when that reform element starts to pop its head. I recall the Prime Minister used to believe that we should privatize CPP, or the idea of moving in that direction.

I listened to what the member was saying and we kind of get the hint that this is what he is referring to. He is saying that the CPP does not necessarily have that same sort of support among the provinces and that it is too much of a challenge to increase the CPP or to gain that momentum. That is where one would expect to see leadership from a government, from a Prime Minister who says that he is committed to government programs, whether it is the CPP, the guaranteed income supplement or otherwise.

Where is the government's commitment to continue to support those programs into the future? Why does the government seem to want to waffle and tend to favour some of those old reform ideas from back in the late nineties?

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I see that the Liberal Party still has not given up on the hidden agenda canard that moved it from this side of the House to official opposition, down to the end as the third party. It continues to promote this idea that there is somehow a hidden agenda.

Nothing could be further from the truth. What we have said is that we are standing to support seniors. What happens when we bring forward initiatives to support our seniors? The Liberal Party votes against them. When we brought in income splitting, the Liberal Party voted against it. When we brought in a new GIS benefit in the last budget, the Liberal Party voted against that too. Whenever we bring in measures that support Canada's seniors, the Liberal Party of Canada will continue to advocate against them. It is on the wrong track. We will continue to move ahead with reasonable voluntary PRPPs that have the support of small businesses and Canadians.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is being called a hidden agenda because the Prime Minister forgot to tell Canadians during the election about his big plans on pensions and how he was going to start changing the OAS. He went to Davos, Switzerland to do that. I think Canadians feel pretty mad at him for doing that.

*Government Orders*

As the Minister of State for Finance said this morning, there is already \$600 billion of room under RRSPs. With that much room obviously not been taken up by people who can even afford to contribute in the first place, why would the government set up a crazy scheme in the private market that is not going to benefit the people who need it the most? Why would it set it up in that way? Would the member agree that it is really just window dressing because nobody is going to take it up?

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, on the take-up of the program, I will take the word of Dan Kelly, Senior Vice-President of Legislative Affairs at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, CFIB, who said, "A new voluntary, low-cost and administratively simple retirement savings mechanism will allow more employers, employees, and the self-employed to participate in a pension plan".

The provinces obviously agree that this is a positive plan because they signed on to it. They are moving to introduce legislation to allow this sort of program to be implemented across all of the provinces. There was no agreement to go down the road of the NDP plan, which would have put employees at risk and raised taxes through payroll hikes. That is not the road we are going down. We are going down the road of a plan that has the agreement of the provinces and the small and medium-sized business sectors. It is the right thing to do. I would encourage New Democrats to vote in favour of it.

• (1645)

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask my fellow colleague this question. Throughout the consultations that he had in his constituency and across the province of British Columbia, did he talk to business owners, as I am, and ask them what the impact would be on them of the increase in CPP? I would ask him to expound on that.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, as Conservatives have gone across the country consulting with Canadians on our economic action plan, we have heard many say, like the hon. member has heard, that this is just not the right time for an increase in CPP. It is too risky to raise payroll taxes at this time.

Again, the CFIB stated:

For every one percentage point increase in CPP premiums beyond the current 9.9 per cent rate, it would cost 220,000 person-years of employment and force wages down roughly 2.5 per cent in the long run.

That is not a plan that Conservatives can support.

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this global financial crisis and Canada's aging population have highlighted the important issue of retirement income security. Our government realizes that Canadian seniors deserve not only our respect but also our support to allow them to enjoy their later years after a lifetime of contributing to our society. They have worked hard to build a better country for future generations. Our government's record shows that we are committed to the financial well-being of Canadian seniors, especially those with low incomes.

While the introduction of pooled registered pension plans, or PRPPs, would not help today's seniors, PRPPs are a key component in providing future financial security for Canadians. Our goal is to provide Canadians with another tool to help them prepare for their retirement in an easy and cost-effective way.

From a young age, we have all been told of the importance of saving for the future, particularly for retirement. PRPPs offer another savings tool to Canadians to help them meet their retirement goals. Sixty per cent of Canadians do not have a workplace pension plan. I am one of those. I was self-employed as a farmer. My land accumulated and, like many others, it was my pension plan. Many employers out there do not want the legal or administrative burden of offering a pension plan to their employees. I believe today's PRPP legislation would play a critical role in improving the range of retirement savings options available to Canadians.

This low-cost retirement savings opportunity is ideal for Canadians who do not currently have access to an employer-offered pension plan. PRPPs would make well-regulated, low-cost, private-sector pension plans accessible to millions who up to now have not had access to such plans. This is great news for many Canadians who are employees of small and medium-sized businesses and self-employed workers. They would now have access to a private pension plan for the very first time. PRPPs are designed to remove many of the traditional barriers that have kept some employers from offering pension plans to their employees in the past. PRPPs would be administered by a regulated financial institution, thereby decreasing the cost, complexity and resource demands for small employers.

PRPPs are a lower cost option due to their scale and design. These plans would result in large pooled funds that would enable plan members to benefit from the lower investment management costs associated with such funds. With PRPPs, participation would be encouraged by automatic enrollment of employees into a PRPP where an employer offers one. Automatic enrollment would encourage regular savings into PRPPs by making participation the default choice of employees who do not actively make a decision to opt out. This is a positive attribute of PRPPs. Employees could have their PRPP contributions automatically taken off their paycheque. It would make saving for the future easier.

In addition, PRPPs would allow members to create an appropriate portfolio that is in line with their investment objectives and risk preferences. The PRPP administrator would also provide members with the educational tools and other resources needed to help the members make informed decisions regarding their PRPP investments. This would be a key improvement to Canada's retirement income system.

PRPPs would also complement and support our government's number one priority, strengthening Canada's economy. That means creating jobs and economic growth.

Some of the retirement income system proposals we looked at in our consultations would have significantly raised costs for both employers and employees. That would have been unacceptable at a time of very tentative economic recovery. Canada's finance ministers opted to prioritize a PRPP framework over other options. It was considered the most effective and targeted way to address the prime areas for improvement identified in our working group's research, particularly modest income and middle-income individuals who do not have access to employer-sponsored pension plans.

*Government Orders*

●(1650)

PRPPs address this gap in the retirement system in a number of ways. A PRPP provides a new accessible, straightforward and administratively low cost retirement option for employers to offer their employees, allowing individuals who currently may not participate in a pension plan, such as the self-employed and employees of companies that do not offer a pension plan, to make use of this new option. It enables more people to benefit from the lower investment management costs that result from membership in a large pooled pension plan. It allows for the portability of benefits that would facilitate an easy transfer between plans, and ensuring that funds are invested in the best interests of plan members.

Those points are all important areas where a retirement income system can and should be improved. That is why federal, provincial and territorial governments are working to implement PRPPs as soon as possible.

Canada's retirement income system has already been recognized around the world as a model that succeeds in reducing poverty among Canadian seniors and in providing high levels of replacement income to retired workers, but we should never rest on our laurels. Anything can and always will be able to be improved, and that is why PRPPs are at the top of that list right now.

Our government will make the right policy decisions to ensure it stays that way. In recent years we have made it even stronger, with a wide range of measures to support those elements of the system with a proven record of success. This includes: providing over \$2 billion in additional annual targeted tax relief to seniors and pensioners through measures such as pension income splitting, increases in the age credit amount, and a doubling of the maximum amount of income eligible for the pension income credit; reforming the framework governing federally regulated pensions to better protect pensioners; working with the provinces to modernize the CPP, making it more flexible for those transitioning out of the workforce to better reflect the way Canadians currently live, work and retire; and most recently in our latest budget, announcing a top-up to the guaranteed income supplement, GIS, benefit for Canada's most vulnerable seniors.

With the introduction of PRPPs we will address the remaining gaps in the system by providing an attractive additional pension option to individuals and employers.

In conclusion, the addition of the PRPPs is clearly a step in the right direction to strengthening a retirement income system that has already delivered for Canadians. It offers Canadians another tool to help them meet their retirement goals.

I am sure there are many individuals out there, including my parents, who could have taken advantage of something like this. As I said earlier, while today's retirees will not be able to benefit from this, future ones will. We certainly look forward to that.

I urge all members in the House to support the government in this major step forward in securing Canadians' retirement income needs.

●(1655)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my esteemed colleague.

He has only good things to say about this new pension plan, but at the same time, the Prime Minister of Canada announced in Davos that cuts would have to be made to the income security system, because Canada would no longer be able to pay for pensions. If this system is so extraordinary and successful, why is it that they are not changing their actuarial studies in their conclusions?

In theory, if a pension plan is working, people no longer need the support of public pension funds like income security and the guaranteed income supplement.

Since that is not the case, this shows at the same time that they admit from the outset that the system is not working.

*[English]*

**Mr. Larry Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I would urge the member to read what the Prime Minister actually said instead of reading what is sent out by the offices of the member's whip's or leader.

The Prime Minister has made it quite clear that changes need to be made. There will be no reduction in retirement income because of this. As I said during my speech, we have a great system but it is not perfect and we should not sit back and rest on our laurels. All programs and all legislation should always be tweaked, and this is no different.

This is something new, and from all the consultation among the territories, provinces, federal government and the private sector, this is long overdue. I am very proud to be here supporting this today. It is going to be great for seniors.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, members will know what my feelings are in regard to how the government is handling the CPP file and government pension programs, which is not very well at all and it is very disrespectful toward those programs. This has caused great concern for many seniors today and for those who are looking at turning the wonderful age of 65.

My question is in regard to the type of support the government has for Bill C-25 and how Canadians will benefit. I am sure the member would acknowledge that Canadians only benefit if provinces are onside to bring in the necessary legislation in order to complement the bill. If that does not happen, hundreds of thousands of Canadians will not even be able to benefit from what the government has proposed.

Could the member provide the House with any indication as to which provinces have agreed to bring in the legislation that would complement Bill C-25?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Larry Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot enlighten my colleague on which provinces have committed, but my understanding is there has been full-fledged consultation between all the provinces and territories. On the first day of Parliament we have this legislation and I would like to think that forward-looking provinces and territories will be looking at the benefit of this for their people to save for retirement and their role in it. I look forward to many, if not all of them, contributing in this. This is a good news story for anyone who wants to save for his or her retirement and in the long term it will help our seniors.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin with a quotation from Mr. Hollande, the French socialist party candidate for the upcoming presidential election in France. He said:

...my real adversary has no name, no face, no party. It will never run for office... and yet it governs...it is the world of finance...

That is certainly the case in France, as it is in Canada, when we look at what the Conservative government is doing. That is exactly it. The government decided that the financial sector is the key to the economic future of Canadian retirees. It wants to keep the financial sector happy instead of meeting the economic needs of future retirees.

Often, the less the Minister of Industry says, the better, but unfortunately, he said:

PRPPs will offer Canadians an innovative new, privately administered, low-cost and accessible pension vehicle to help them meet their objectives.

That is what he is offering future retirees, but none of it is true. There is nothing new about the plan. A similar program has been in place in Australia for 12 years, during which time Australians have had enough quantifiable experience to say that it is a failure. It does not work. It is not producing the outcome they expected.

“Privately administered, low-cost and accessible.” That is the problem. This plan is so private that there are no limits set by regulations. The bill is not supported by any regulations.

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

• (1700)

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** There are no limits on the administrative fees that will be billed in this program and that will achieve their objectives. However, the problem is that even if the future pensioners know how much they are paying, they will never know how much they will get back when they retire. Is that really achieving an objective, paying and not knowing how much one will receive? That is by no means an objective.

Our Prime Minister went to Davos. Speaking to his friends in the financial sector, far away from Canadians, he informed them—the people of Canada—that their pensions were no longer guaranteed. With remarkable complacency, he talked about the fact that people were seeing that their wealth, their services and their pensions no longer belong to them. He criticized developed countries for their general desire to pay for standards and advantages that they cannot afford. The problem is not that they cannot afford them; the problem is that wealth is being hoarded by a financial sector so speculative that it is losing vast sums of money.

The financial sector's greed is entirely to blame for the recent economic recession, but no one talks about that. Wilful ignorance and complete blindness are the status quo. Everyone seems to have memory lapses and to be complacent. We forget about all the money squandered by the financial sector, which is still not keeping its promises. In Canada, what grew the fastest were not bank dividends, but the bonuses the banks paid to their top executives. That speaks volumes. It speaks volumes about who earns money and who loses it. Generally, pensioners do not come out as winners with this government.

This same government, which brags about its record when it comes to the economy, is comparing itself to the worst. It compares itself to countries like Italy and Greece. It does not compare itself to Germany, Sweden or Norway. No. It compares itself to a small club of lesser countries that adopted the same bad policy it did. It compares itself to the very worst. One day I would like our government to compare our country to the best. Then it would realize that creating 100,000 net new jobs since 2008 is not really an accomplishment, losing 350,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector that have not been replaced is not an accomplishment, and replacing jobs that pay \$25 an hour with jobs that pay \$10 an hour is no way to create wealth in a country. It is shameful.

A myth has been circulating in the past few days that it is fiscally responsible to roll the dice with Canadians' pensions and bet the money on the markets. We can do whatever we want with other people's money. It does not matter. Regardless of what happens, pooled registered pension plans will always guarantee a source of income and administrative fees. Regardless of how they perform, good or bad, the financial sector will always make money.

However, the whole idea behind a pension plan is not to help a certain sector make money. The idea is to guarantee to pensioners that they will be able to collect their pensions and be sheltered from poverty. That is absolutely not what the government is doing, to the extent that RRSPs, TFSA's and all the other private savings plans have no impact at all on actuarial studies regarding future trends in the government's ability to cover the cost of the guaranteed income supplement.

The government says it will cost too much, but if there were a better alternative, people would not need to ask for financial support from the government. They would not need it and they would be able to provide good pensions for themselves.

• (1705)

That is never the case. It basically shows that the government's calculations are wrong and that this pension scheme has only one objective: to give the financial sector what it wants, that is, the economic governance of this country.

This type of pension plan already exists in Australia. We can use it for analytical and comparative purposes. It is interesting because it was introduced almost 10 years ago in Australia, which gives us some hindsight and allows us to analyze the results in detail. First, the plan was mandatory although it was possible to opt out. Employers were required to sign up their employees for one of the many defined contribution plans provided by the private sector.

*Government Orders*

The Australian government has analyzed the results. It was rather important that it provide some analysis of the financial results. Studies commissioned by the Australian government indicate that people are not really saving. The management fees are so high and the returns so low that it would be more beneficial for employees to directly deposit their money into very low interest bank accounts. They would earn more and not lose money. If they leave their money in the private sector, they lose it. That is unacceptable.

People are being asked to put their money into a pension plan and, to date, in Australia, they are receiving less than they paid in. And yet, the Australian financial system did not hesitate to demand investment and management fees. Things went wrong. It is a major problem.

Canada has a low-cost alternative that has already proven to be effective: the Canada pension plan. No one is disputing this fact. No other system is managed for such a low cost. No one is disputing this. No one is questioning that it is appropriately capitalized.

All they are saying is that the plan will be increased over a 10-year period, not tomorrow morning. That means that, over a 10-year period, a surplus—a portion of future earnings—will be skimmed off. Part of the increase in earnings will be directed to the pension fund. We cannot ask for more in terms of the gradual nature of contributions.

Nevertheless, this government opposes it. It prefers to deprive Canadians of a secure pension in the future rather than to deprive its friends in the financial sector of a single dollar.

Mr. Hollande said that his enemy was the financial sector. Here in the House, the financial sector is represented by a political party that, unfortunately, is in power. That party would do well to remember that it was elected not by the financial sector, but by Canadians. That party promised to represent Canadians, but it is more interested in spoliation than in representation.

The government has the financial means to do this in Canada without upsetting the economy, hindering economic growth or damaging the business sector in any way. God knows that we do not want to hurt the business sector. We want to create jobs. We will not stand by and watch unemployment numbers rise. We want to find a way to turn the unemployed into workers.

We will fight for it. We will fight as hard as we can because this plan is worthless. A pension plan should produce results and have a defined objective. The government has an obligation to produce results. That is what a pension plan is: a result. All the government is saying is that it will take people's money and, with luck, it might give something back to them when they retire. That is unacceptable.

That is why I invite all Canadians to fight this worthless plan and support a public Canadian pension plan that has proven its worth in the past and will continue to do so.

• (1710)

[*English*]

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I probably disagreed with everything my colleague said in his speech. It was quite poignant that he was quoting a socialist politician from France to get his information.

Let us talk about the reality of today and let us talk about the head-in-the-sand politics of the NDP. If we look at what the Minister of State for Finance has done the last couple of years, he has listened to Canadians and has asked them what they want. From what we have heard, they want choice. They want improvements to their retirement income.

If the NDP members were paying attention, to make the changes they would want to the CPP would require the consent of two-thirds of the provinces and, frankly, in this day and age, there is no consensus. What do they want us to do? Do they want us to wait and rest on our laurels? No, we are providing options to Canadians.

Why is the member against options for Canadians? Would the NDP force the provinces and businesses to go along with a plan that they clearly have told the Government of Canada they do not want? What would the member do if he were in that situation?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is making the same argument as his colleague from Saint Boniface, who said that many stakeholders came and spoke in favour of this plan at the Standing Committee on Finance. I was sitting on that committee and the people who were in favour of this system all represented financial institutions. However, those who stand in line at the food banks, who need a cheque to pay for their groceries, their rent and their clothes, all told us that they need improvements to the Canada pension plan.

Who is the government listening to, Canadians or financiers? We have decided to listen to Canadians, people who want something positive for their economic future.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have acknowledged the importance of the OAS, the GIS and the CPP. I think there is a lot of agreement with the NDP quite possibly in regard to the support of that.

I have asked the member to provide a list of the provinces that would be enacting the provincial legislation that would enable this legislation, otherwise it would be very limited in terms of who would benefit from the program. If the province of Quebec, for example, were to indicate that it would like this legislation to go to committee, or if other provinces, ideally a half dozen or so provinces, wanted to see the bill go to committee, would the New Democratic Party support it going to committee?

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, what he is proposing is poverty. You say that there is something good, but since there is no consensus, we are going to take money that should be going to the Canada pension plan and give it to financial institutions. How does that guarantee a pension for Canadians retiring in the future? You should—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. You must address your remarks to the Speaker and not to the other members. The hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Liberal Party of Canada is saying one thing and doing another. That is not new. We cannot count on that party's support in the struggle to ensure that Canadians have a pension fund. All that political party wants is to look good and sound good, but there is nothing more to it. It is an old party that produces nothing. All it produces is a speech that calls for inaction.

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin for his speech and the passion with which he defends pensions. One of the NDP's proposals would protect pensions when a company files for bankruptcy. I would like to hear more about NDP proposals to reform or enhance pensions.

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, it is a problem that clearly indicates how important it is to intervene politically when it comes to retirement plans. Too many companies—as was unfortunately the case with Nortel—have gone bankrupt when they had an unfunded actuarial liability in their private pension plans. As a result, pensioners saw their pensions cut down—by as much as 45% in the case of Nortel. That is huge. Half of each pension cheque disappeared.

To deal with similar situations, the NDP is calling for two measures. First, it is asking that the full amount of the actuarial liability in the pension fund be given preferred creditor status and that that liability be paid first. If there is any money at all, it should go to pensioners. That is crucial. It is a question of loyalty. Second, if that is not enough, the NDP is asking that any capital losses incurred in the private pension plan be deducted from future revenues. This practice is already widely accepted. We may buy a share for \$200 and sell it for \$100, with a loss of \$100. This loss can be set against our income. That is all we are asking for, and it would help many people avoid poverty.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's excellent speech. What strikes me, negatively of course, about the government's arguments is that the program set out in Bill C-25, that is, pooled registered pension plans, comes in response to Canadians' lack of savings and the difficulty they have saving. Let me remind the House of some facts: 70% of Canadians do not invest in RRSPs despite the tax incentives; 60% of Canadians do not invest in TFSAs; and of the 40% of Canadians who do invest in TFSAs, 20% earn \$100,000 or more.

So we already have voluntary systems that Canadians do not use. The government's response to this is to propose another voluntary system, rather than examine the reasons why Canadians do not have enough disposable income to save, either because people do not necessarily have the income or because they want to use their income for household expenses considering their low income. The system therefore seems to be inadequate.

I wonder what my colleague has to say about the government's response, which I think is a little off the mark, considering the current situation, that is, insufficient incomes.

• (1720)

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. At present, the problem with RRSPs and TFSAs, like this new group savings plan—and I mean “group savings plan” because

that is what it is—is that they are not pension plans. A pension plan guarantees a certain income and protects people from poverty. This new plan is simply a way of saving. Unfortunately, like RRSPs and TFSAs, this group savings plan is also a tax loophole. Who can afford to invest a maximum of \$22,000 in an RRSP when the average income in Canada is \$37,000? It is a tax loophole for the wealthy. People in Canada complain because some people in the United States pay only 15% of their income, but it is a good thing that they are in the U.S., because they would pay only 5% in Canada.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this important topic today. I will be sharing my time with the member for Oshawa.

Through numerous cross-country consultations, our government has talked to many Canadians and heard too many challenging personal stories not to realize that this is an issue that is too important to get wrong.

Our government has devoted considerable effort on the retirement security issue in order to get it right. We have been engaged in a very serious discussion with Canadians on pension and retirement income security issues over the past few years. Our record of support for seniors remains strong and has been since our very first budget.

Let us look at the facts.

In June 2006, we increased the age credit amount by \$1,000 and then we increased it another \$1,000 in 2009. This year alone, the age credit will provide up to \$1,008 in federal tax relief for eligible seniors. That is significant.

Other significant tax relief measures provided since 2006 for seniors and pensioners include: doubling the maximum amount of income eligible for the pension income credit from \$1,000 to \$2,000 in 2006; the introduction of pension income splitting in 2007; and the increase in the age limit for maturing pensions and RRSPs from 69 to 71 in 2007.

I would also like to mention the tax free savings account, a general purpose savings vehicle that helps all Canadians, including seniors, to meet their ongoing savings needs on a tax preferred basis. Of note, TFSA investment income and withdrawals do not affect eligibility for federal income tested benefits or credits, such as old age security, the guaranteed income supplement or the goods and services tax credit.

*Government Orders*

Those are things that our government has done that provide substantial benefits to seniors across our country. This is tax relief that is benefiting seniors right now as we speak. Seniors and all Canadians can be confident that it will benefit them well into the future as our government implements the next phase of Canada's economic action plan and the return to balanced budgets.

The next phase of Canada's economic action plan announces new measures to improve the financial security of our most vulnerable seniors and ensure that seniors can benefit from and contribute to the quality of life in their community through active living and participation in social activities and access to a new low cost pension option.

The plan provides an additional \$10 million over two years to enhance the new horizons for seniors program. This additional funding is enabling more seniors to participate in social activities, pursue an active life and contribute to their community. The program provides funding for projects to expand awareness of elder abuse or promote volunteering, monitoring and social participation of seniors, and this is important.

Going forward, a key component of ensuring financial security for all Canadians and for seniors will be the introduction of the pooled registered pension plan, or PRPP, as agreed at the December 2010 finance ministers' meeting in Alberta. The Government of Canada is working closely with its provincial and territorial counterparts to move forward with the legislative and regulatory changes necessary to create the PRPP. The bill before us today, the PRPP act, represents the federal portion of the PRPP framework and is a major step forward in implementing PRPPs.

Once the provinces put in place their PRPP legislation, the legislative and regulatory framework for PRPPs will be operational, thereby allowing PRPP administrators to develop and offer plans to Canadians and to their employers. These plans would help Canadians, including the self-employed, meet their retirement objectives by providing access to a new low cost, accessible pension option. Federal, provincial and territorial officials are working together to implement PRPPs as soon as possible.

The provinces and territories are essential partners in a strong retirement system. They play a major role in the regulation of private defined benefit pension plans. All of them are joint stewards of the Canada pension plan along with our federal government.

• (1725)

This is an important point to remember. We are not in this alone. It is a point that, sadly, seems to have eluded some on the opposition benches, judging by the hastily concocted proposals they have put forward today. For example, the opposition conveniently forgets that changes to the CPP require the approval of at least two-thirds of the Canadian provinces representing at least two-thirds of the country's population.

On this side of the House, we worked together alongside the provinces and territories, with an eye on the long term.

Seniors have worked hard to build a better country for future generations. Our record shows that our government is committed to the financial well-being of all Canadian seniors. Our seniors have made our country what it is today and with the introduction of the

PRPP, Canadians can look forward to an even stronger retirement system.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the brief comments made by the member who just spoke. I would like her to elaborate on what she believes to be the added value of the system proposed by Bill C-25 as compared to existing retirement savings plans to which Canadians do not seem to want to contribute.

I do not see how this bill, with the proposed plan, will suddenly be popular with Canadians when registered retirement savings plans, which are very similar to what is being proposed in Bill C-25, are not.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very astute question and I would be very pleased to answer it.

This program is the first of its kind in Canada. It would benefit small businesses. It would benefit people who do not have retirement plans right now, and there are many Canadians who do not. Therefore, if people happen to own a business, or happen to work for a business, or have a home business, this would allow them to ensure their retirement plan in the future. As we know, a myriad of home businesses are run by women. A lot of women put forward their home businesses and they take care of their families,

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member has done a lot of work in protecting young people who come to our country against their will, in terms of human smuggling, and thank her for all the work she has done in that area.

We have talked a fair amount about this plan being important to seniors and others who are getting close. However, what I think is more important is that with the pooled plan, if a young person joins a firm that is part of a pooled plan, he or she has to opt out of it and the person automatically gets a pension plan. That is not the case with an RRSP. People have to choose to do it themselves. This way people think about why it is important for young people to think about their futures and the pension programs that they may have.

Would my colleague comment on that?

• (1730)

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, what is so important about this plan is that it is good for everyone. It is good for the employers because there are businesses that cannot afford the pension plans presently. They need the pooled pension in order to offer that pension plan to their employees. Young people are looking to their future. They know in a few short years time will go by and they will need to support themselves so they can live independently.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we should be very much aware that this program would not apply for everyone. In order for it to apply for everyone, we need to have the different provinces onside.



*Government Orders*

What I like about the debate on Bill C-25 is that it really puts into perspective the difference between the Conservatives/Reformers compared to the Liberals. The Liberals believe in the CPP. We believe in the GIC. We believe in the OAS. The government, on the other hand, chooses not to support those programs, in favour of just talking about the PRPP as the answer to all the issues related to pensions, with which we disagree. It is not the answer to all the situations.

The member talked about the need to have three-quarters of the provinces onside in order to change the CPP, which would have demonstrated a need for strong leadership from the Prime Minister, which we did not see.

How many of the provinces today are in support of Bill C-25, if in fact it goes to committee and passes, and how many would actually bring in their own provincial legislation? Does the government have a number on that?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, what is so strong about looking at the fair, balanced approach to pension plans in Canada and ensuring that OAS and CPP continue to thrive, grow and meet the needs of seniors is the collaboration that our government has done throughout this whole process. The finance ministers have worked together. In fact, when the finance ministers were working together to assess the CPP program to ensure it was sustainable, which they concluded was sustainable for the next 75 years, that led to the PRPP initiative. All the finance ministers in all provinces together agreed that it was time to put the framework together.

Our federal government has taken the lead in this framework and presented this bill today. We will continue to work with all the provinces in this very collaborative project.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am standing in the House tonight to speak about an extremely important issue. It is an issue that affects not only the people in my home riding of Oshawa, but Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is an issue that we dare not put off and cannot put off any longer.

Last May Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to continue its strong and stable policy of guiding Canada through this fragile economic recovery. Canada is leading the charge and is the envy of the world in terms of our economic and fiscal policy. One of the major reasons Canada is hailed as an economic leader is due to this government's forward thinking and long term approach to the economic challenges of the future. Nowhere is this more evident than the issue of retirement security for our seniors and for future generations of seniors. That is why I am speaking tonight.

I strongly disagree with the implications of the members across the way that this government is somehow failing seniors. To put it bluntly, they are plain wrong. The Conservative government has done more to put money back into the pockets of seniors than any other government in Canadian history. In 2006 we increased the age credit amount by \$1,000 and we increased it another \$1,000 in 2009. For the 2011 tax year, the age credit will provide up to \$981 in tax relief for eligible seniors. Other significant tax relief provided since 2006 for seniors and pensioners includes doubling the maximum amount of income eligibility for pension income credit from \$1,000

to \$2,000, introducing pension income splitting and increasing the age limit for maturing pensions and RRSPs from 69 to 71.

While our government is extremely proud of these measures, we are still faced with an even more pressing challenge of ensuring retirement security for seniors and future generations of seniors. What we will not do is what the opposition plans to do, and that is put its head in the sand and ignore the issue until a crisis is thrust upon us. We will not play on the emotions and fears of seniors and pensioners for political gain, as the NDP did with Bill C-501. Furthermore, the NDP is so focused on expanding CPP as a means of strengthening retirement security that it is preventing it from making real positive changes and improvements today.

I do agree with the opposition that the CPP is important. Federal, provincial and territorial ministers of finance have discussed a CPP expansion. However, the changes that the NDP would want would not only threaten our economic recovery, it would also require the support of two-thirds of the provinces. There is no current consensus or agreement among the provinces at this time. Where does that leave us? Do we just wait until the provinces come to a consensus? Waiting is not an option.

I am proud to say that over the past two years our government's commitment to a stronger retirement income system has taken my colleague, the Minister of State for Finance, to communities across the country. He has been consulting with Canadians, meeting with his provincial and territorial counterparts, discussing key considerations with small and medium-sized businesses and receiving valuable input from some of the most respected experts in the retirement income field. In response to these extensive consultations, the minister has come up with a viable and sustainable plan to help people prepare for their future retirement.

I would like to thank the Minister of State for Finance for helping the government unveil its pooled registered pension plan, or what we are calling PRPPs. I am proud to say that the PRPPs would mark a significant step forward in advancing our retirement income agenda.

PRPPs are a low cost and accessible option that would help more Canadians meet their retirement goals. The introduction of PRPPs marks a particularly significant advancement in supporting the retirement needs of small businesses and their employees, who up until now have not had access to a large scale low cost pension option.

*Government Orders*

As a chiropractor who used to be a small business owner, I can attest to the benefits that PRPPs would provide the self-employed and their employees. PRPPs would improve the range of retirement savings options to Canadians by: first, providing a new accessible, straightforward and administratively low cost retirement option for employers to offer their employees; second, allowing individuals who currently may not participate in a pension plan, such as the self-employed and employees of companies that do not offer a pension plan, to make use of this new type of pension plan; third, enabling more people to benefit from the lower investment management costs that result from membership in a large pooled pension plan; fourth, allowing for accumulated benefits to move with people from job to job; and fifth, ensuring that funds are invested in the best interest of plan members.

● (1735)

Some of the retirement income system proposals that were presented in our consultations would have significantly raised costs for employers and employees. Introducing them would have been unacceptable during a very tentative and fragile economic recovery. On the other hand, PRPPs would be efficiently managed, privately administered pension arrangements that would provide greater choice for employers and individuals, thereby promoting pension coverage and retirement savings.

The Government of Canada recently introduced legislation to put in place the federal requirements supporting the framework for PRPPs. In addition, the Minister of State for Finance met with the provinces to encourage and assist them in making the same necessary changes from their side. Unlike the NDP's ideas, PRPPs have the support of all of the provinces. Furthermore, PRPPs would also complement and support the Government of Canada's overarching objective of creating and sustaining jobs, leveraging business investments and securing our economic recovery and sustainable private sector driven growth.

Again, unlike the NDP, support for this program is coming from the small business community as well. Dan Kelly, vice-president, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, stated in a press release:

We believe that, if properly implemented by provinces, PRPPs have the potential to expand the retirement savings options for thousands of Canadian small businesses and their employees.

Chris, a small business owner from my own riding of Oshawa, told me:

The Pooled Retirement Pension Plan is of critical import given the great upcoming increase of retired persons and their need for balanced retirement income. As a small business owner since 1995 I consider the pooled pension program a commendable, voluntary, and low-cost means to effectively address a major gap in retirement income disparity.

Not only are PRPPs receiving support from the provinces and the business community but they are receiving support from the academics as well. Robert Pozen, a senior lecturer at Harvard Business School and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, stated in the October 23, 2011 edition of the *Financial Times*:

Like many developed nations, Canada continues to refine its retirement system. As part of that effort, the provincial governments will soon authorise a new savings vehicle – Pooled Registered Pension Plans (PRPPs). With the right policy decisions, PRPPs will go a long way towards increasing retirement security for millions of Canadians.

In short, PRPPs have the potential to increase significantly retirement savings in Canada....

That is what it is all about. The institution of PRPPs is a tangible and excellent step for enhancing income and retirement security for seniors. The broad support from the provinces, small business owners and academics and this government's initiative are something that the opposition has yet to build.

Working together with the provinces and small businesses, I am confident we can get these important new retirement vehicles up and running for Canadians in a timely manner. I ask the hon. members of the opposition to join us in helping seniors instead of voting against everything that we bring forward for seniors and people on pensions. Our record of support for seniors and strengthening retirement security for seniors remains strong and has been so since day one. Any claims to the contrary by members of the opposition simply cannot stand up when we look at the facts.

● (1740)

BILL C-25—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Our government continues to focus on the economy and the long-term economic security of Canadians and the pooled registered pension plan act that we are now debating does just that by making it easier for millions of Canadians who are self-employed or work for small businesses to save for retirement. As the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says, "This can't come soon enough from our perspective".

I would like to advise that an agreement has not been reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-25, An Act relating to pooled registered pension plans and making related amendments to other Acts.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage. As a courtesy to the House, it is my intention to propose that two further days of debate be allotted in addition to today.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is just typical. Here we are, on the first day back from being away from the House, and already the government House leader has to rush in. We have had one day of debate on this very important bill about the future of our pension system and the government has to rush in, close down debate and close down the democratic voice of this House. I think it is disgusting.

Members on this side of the House are here ready to debate the legislation on its merits. Hearing this kind of antic from the government House leader is becoming the pattern we have come to expect from the Conservative government.

*Government Orders*

I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health a question. We have heard that this pooled pension plan is good for everybody. The fact is that many people will not even be able to afford to go into this plan. Why is it that the banks will end up making a whole ton of money on this plan? There is no limit on the administration fees or costs. Why did the Conservatives leave that out? They could have at least put in some limits on the fees that will be charged so that people will not get ripped off.

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Mr. Speaker, if my colleague had listened to my speech and to the speeches of other government members, she would realize that one of the reasons we are bringing this in is exactly that reason, to lower the cost for Canadians. In comparison to RRSPs, by having a pooled pension plan, it would distribute the costs across a wider sector enabling lower administrative costs.

This is what it is all about. We on this side of the House want to do is act now to see what we can do to allow seniors to keep more money in their own pockets. Ever since 2006, on every initiative that we have brought forward to help seniors and pensioners, the NDP has stood in this House and voted against it.

What kind of ideas are the NDP coming up with? What is the leaderless NDP coming up with today? It is coming up with exactly zero ideas that could be implemented. It wants to look at changing the CPP, which, as we have heard over and over again, requires two-thirds of the provinces, and there is no consensus to do that.

What we are doing on this side of this House is we are acting today, we are acting for seniors and we are supporting seniors. Let us see the NDP get on board with that.

• (1745)

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will really try to stay calm after listening to the most ridiculous thing I have heard in my life.

We have just started a debate on something that is really important. We on this side of the House are trying to work with the government. Pension issues are important. We have a pension crisis looming in this country. We have talking about pension reform and our supplementary CPP. The NDP has its own proposals.

We have been talking about moving an issue forward. However, for the government to turn around and put closure on debate because maybe we are talking too much about all the other pension frustrations is very frustrating. There is no democracy left in this country.

I will get back to the issue I am supposed to be talking about, because I do try to focus on what the question of the day is. We are talking about wanting to move forward. We have many articles and this is one that I am happy to table today dated May 30, 2011. it reads:

Australian Pension Study finds that high fees and costs of private sector pension plans seriously limit investment returns for pensioners.

It goes on. It was a very extensive study that was done. Australia did it 12 years ago and it is now cancelling it because it is finding it to be a huge failure. The pensioners are the losers. Financial institutions and insurance companies are the big winners because of the management fees.

The government knew this was a problem beforehand and it still went forward. Is it so desperate to bring something forward that it will go with something we know is flawed, rather than trying to listen to and maybe work with the other parties on coming forward with some really good changes?

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Mr. Speaker, what would be extremely flawed is to do absolutely nothing and bring forward nothing, which is exactly what the Liberal Party did for 13 years and which is why it is sitting at the very end of the House of Commons.

I commend the Minister of State for Finance for not only going out and talking to the communities but for listening to them. He has listened to academics, the business community and Canadians. He wants to work with the provinces. The NDP and the Liberals, in pure socialist fashion, would like to just jam something down the provinces' throat without allowing debate and without allowing them to put forward their ideas.

I challenge the opposition members to stand up here in House and support our government instead of voting against all the initiatives that we have put forward since 2006. I ask them to work with us because we are on the side of pensioners and seniors and they just cannot come up with any new ideas.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I always find it ironic listening to members opposite.

Despite all the heckling, and I am not speaking entirely from personal memory, but I can tell the Canadian people that the Conservative Party voted against the introduction of the old age pension in 1927. The Conservative Party was opposed to the original Canada pension plan.

The leader of the Conservative Party, in his then job as the president of the National Citizens Coalition, was opposed to the improvements in the Canada pension plan that led to its sustainability, for which he took credit at Davos in his speech last week. That required an act of contortion that one could not even find in a circus. Now members of the Conservative Party turn around and say that they are the ones who are going to protect the Canadian pension system.

We cannot trust those wolves to protect the Canadian pension system. It requires the determination of this House to really understand where we are going and how we need to go forward in order for us to get to where we need to get to.

The subject of the conversation today is with respect to the pooled pension plan, which I will come to in a moment, but first we need to understand the context in which we are working and living.

The Canadian pension system over time has evolved with the thought that fundamentally Canadians would be able to save at their workplace, that they would also receive a Canada pension plan and, if necessary, old age pension and a guaranteed income supplement as a way of sustaining them through old age. I might add that the guaranteed income supplement was also something that was brought in by the Liberal Party when it was in government.

*Government Orders*

We need to understand that the dramatic changes that have taken place in the Canadian economy, in the Canadian workforce and in the makeup of the Canadian workforce has meant that private company pension plans can no longer be relied upon to provide security for most workers. The Canada pension plan, as improved as it is, is still not a sufficient source of support for people as they get older. The old age pension is a very necessary part of retirement for people who are over the age of 65 and the guaranteed income supplement is essential for those low income Canadians who have no other source of income in their years of retirement.

Therefore, we need to understand the way in which the Prime Minister has attempted to frame this debate and the way in which the Conservatives, even in their speeches today, have attempted to frame this debate.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

The Conservative Party specializes in attack politics and politics that try to put a spin on the issue. It says there is a crisis with regard to the sustainability of the system because in 2030 there will be more seniors and the cost of the system might increase by roughly 2% to 3%. Good grief, that is hardly a crisis.

Who is receiving this pension? Probably no one on that side or on this side will be affected by these changes. Even those who listened to the speech in Davos, in the Swiss Alps, will not be affected by the Prime Minister's decision. The Prime Minister himself will not be affected. People who earn less than \$30,000 are the ones who will be affected, and that is what bothers me.

Is there a problem for the aging population? Indeed, there is, but the problem of the plan's sustainability concerns not only public finances, but also the finances of every family in the country.

[*English*]

What we find is a situation where more and more Canadians are borrowing in order to sustain themselves. We know that people who are older are even borrowing through their mortgages and so on in order to sustain themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to embarrass you personally, but I suspect you were one of the people on the platform talking to your fellow voters. I am sure if you were quoting from the Conservative Party election platform, you were saying that it would not touch transfers to health care, education and seniors. That is what the Conservative Party promised in the last election. That was the Prime Minister's promise.

Imagine our surprise when we saw the Prime Minister's grand plan on the front page of the *Globe and Mail*. Obviously, it was not a complete surprise to the *Globe and Mail*. These things do not appear with any spontaneity.

Quoting of the *Globe and Mail*, the grand plan of the Prime Minister is a plan that was never discussed with the people of Canada in the last election. It was not presented to the Canadian people in the last election. It was a grand plan that was worthy of his Alpine perch, but it was not worthy of a discussion on the factory floor and on the doorsteps and porches of the people of Canada. That is the problem we have.

If the Prime Minister thinks for a moment that he will be able to create this kind of evasive activity, avoiding the question of what is central to the issue of the people of our country, he is sadly mistaken.

The member for Oshawa who just spoke used the same words again, that the Conservative Party had received a mandate, blah, blah, blah. I can tell the members of the Conservative Party that the Liberal Party has received its own mandate. That mandate is very clear. That mandate is to hold the government to account. That mandate is to say to the people of Canada to call a spade a spade. When the Prime Minister of Canada does not disclose to the Canadian people what his real plan is, when he has to go to Switzerland to disclose what his real plan is, we will disclose that fact to the people of Canada very clearly.

The government's proposal with respect to the pooled pension issue is an attempt to deal with a serious issue that is facing the country. I say it is an attempt. We have to understand exactly what that serious issue is.

About 60% of Canadian workers, 11 million out of nearly 19 million, have no pension plan other than the Canada pension plan and the OAS. Also, 30% of workers have no RRSP savings and have no company pension.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

In the meantime, we have to acknowledge that only 6 million people have contributed to current retirement savings plans.

There is definitely a problem, but the question is whether the government's response is adequate. That is the question. We are clearly saying it is not adequate because it does not meet the real needs of the public and it does not address the real problem.

We have to acknowledge that the majority of workers do not have a private plan and that the majority of people have not contributed to a registered retirement savings plan. That is the problem.

[*English*]

However, we have to look and see where we are with respect to what has been proposed. What has been proposed is the kind of lowest common denominator that the government says it was able to get consensus on with the provinces. It essentially means that we are now going to cover the next small tranche of people. We will see how big it is, we will see how major it is and we will see what the take-up rate is. A very small group of people is going to be covered by what is called the pooled pension plans, which would be run by the private sector.

*Government Orders*

What we also know is that the fees charged by the private sector in Canada to people who decide to save with the private sector are among the highest fees in the OECD. Why are they so high? Because there is not (a) effective regulation and (b) effective competition. That is why the Liberal Party, and my colleague from York West has been leading this fight very effectively, has proposed that we should grant to the Canada pension plan the opportunity to compete with the private plans for the voluntary approach that is being followed by the government. If we do not have the competition from the public sector to compete with the private sector for these savings, we will continue to see fees being charged that are completely out of line because of the structure of the Canadian financial industry.

This is a serious problem. I know the minister, with whom I have talked about this issue, says that he thinks the problem is solved and that it can be rectified. He does not think it is going to be a big deal. I can only say for the minister that I think our experiences speak long and loud to that. The experience in Australia speaks long and loud to that. We have to recognize that in what is being proposed by the government today there is still a serious problem and a serious inadequacy in dealing with the general challenge facing the people of Canada.

I was asked today by the CBC if I agreed with the Prime Minister that there was a crisis of sustainability in our system. I said, "I suppose if you ask the question, you could ask if there is a crisis of sustainability with respect to public broadcasting". If we listen to the way the Conservatives frame the argument, everything the government has ever done is under a crisis of sustainability, whether it is health care, pensions, education, just name it, and the answer is to get rid of it, shut it down, hand it over to the private sector and let some guy run it, but do not let the government take an interest.

We have to understand that there is a crisis of social justice in our country. There is a crisis of what is fair and right in our country. There is a growing gap between rich and poor in our country, as there is around the world. In fact, this was even the theme of the Davos conference. The theme was the contradiction between a system which produces prosperity and the fact that it does not produce prosperity for everyone and that prosperity is not being shared.

Yes, there is a crisis. The Prime Minister's answer to that crisis is to make the rich richer and make the poor poorer. Conservatives have no problem saying that they will split incomes for middle-class families. They have no problem granting a significant advantage to people by doing that income splitting, but they have a serious problem with respect to the social justice of the people who are making less than \$30,000 or \$40,000 a year. That is the problem they have and that is where we have to say, yes, everyone wants prosperity, but we want prosperity to be shared. We want the prosperity to be sustainable, but we want that sustainability not to be applied and supplied on a selective basis.

We do not want a woman on provincial welfare waiting for her pension and her application for the guaranteed income supplement to be told, "Sorry, you have to wait for another year". That is going to cost her \$10,000, \$12,000, \$15,000, \$20,000 a year. That is the difference for the person, only that person in the Conservative world

will be invisible. Conservatives will not worry about her because her problem is one of sustainability. There is a crisis of credibility here.

• (1800)

When the Prime Minister of Canada stands up during an election debate and says, "I promise you", looking right into that camera, "I will not cut transfers to the provinces for health care. I will not cut transfers for education and I will not cut transfers for individuals", meaning seniors, and when he says something else in Switzerland and something else in the law that is coming in March or April, we have a serious problem, and the Liberal Party will be fighting that all the way.

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party was talking about a crisis in credibility. I would like to remind the House that coming from that seat, being that he was premier of the socialist New Democratic Party in Ontario, when we had days in his name and he did all kinds of things, he had no credibility as the premier of the province.

Now he is saying this government should ignore what the provinces have to say, what the premiers have to say about the pension fund, which they have with CPP and the plan they are involved with, should we ignore—

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. I am sure the hon. member for Burlington wants to finish his question. The difficulty is there is a number of hon. members who I am sure would want to hear the question, and I am sure the hon. member for Toronto Centre would want to as well, but there is too much noise in the House. I would ask the hon. member for Burlington to finish his question and then we will go to the hon. member for Toronto Centre for his response.

• (1805)

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, I will not have to yell because they are quiet over there now.

The point is that during his speech the hon. member talked about credibility. We treat with respect the premiers of the provinces. They have the right to decide for their provinces what they want to do in terms of the pension plan, the CPP and this pooled plan of which they are in support.

Does he want us to ignore the rights and responsibilities of the premiers when he was once a New Democratic premier of Ontario? When he was premier, would he have tolerated the federal government ignoring his wishes?

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Mr. Speaker, let the record state that I was the premier of Ontario. The member failed to mention that while I was premier, the Toronto Blue Jays won the World Series, not just once—

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Are you taking credit for the Blue Jays?

**Hon. Bob Rae:** He is asking me if I am taking credit for the Blue Jays. He is giving me blame for everything else.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. I appreciate hon. members' enthusiasm this afternoon, but we do need order in the House.

*Government Orders*

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vancouver East.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with all the heckling, I am not sure if the leader of the Liberal Party actually wants to hear a question because there is so much noise going on. Maybe those members do or maybe they do not, I am not sure.

This issue around pensions is a crisis that has been developing for a number of years as we have seen more and more seniors fall below the poverty line. Certainly those of us who were around in the days when there was a Liberal majority government, a Liberal minority government and certainly with the new Conservative government, raised this issue, and continue to, of the need to increase the OAS and the GIS and to, in effect, bring about changes to the Canada pension plan. Therefore, I am glad to hear the Liberal leader speak about his opposition to the government's proposal.

Does he agree with me that the proposals we have to basically focus on the Canada pension plan as a sound system that is fully funded and that does reach Canadians across the country is the proper way to go in terms of sound public policy? We have a proposal to increase the Canada pension plan. Would he agree that this would be the proper way to go?

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to try to score too many points, but the last time we went through a difficult process of negotiations with the provinces and substantially increased the contributions of individuals, it was opposed by the New Democratic Party at the time. We have no problem with saying we need to continue to talk to the provinces about improvements in the Canada pension plan. There is a very legitimate argument that the provinces have not agreed to the changes in the CPP and that we cannot ignore what the provinces are saying and doing.

My difficulty is that we have to see this problem in a much broader context than that in which it is currently being discussed. That context is one in which there are so many seniors and so many workers today who are not covered by any plan, who are not covered by RRSPs and who are not sufficiently covered. If the government is going to go ahead with this pooled plan which has the support of the provinces, at the very least, we should not only increase the GIS and improve the situation for people who are on old age pensions, we should also allow the Canada pension plan to compete effectively with the pooled plans in order to keep the rates down on administration of the pooled plans.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member deserves a serious question. We are not trying to score points or to be cheap like certain members opposite. The matter is clear. At present, there are many seniors and workers who are worried because they do not have a pension plan. They do not know what will happen in 20 or 25 years.

How does the member explain this crisis fabricated by the government? What kind of debate should we have to reassure people and not trigger pointless crises?

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Mr. Speaker, this is a well-used strategy by neo-conservatives in Canada and other parts of the world. They create crises here and there so that the people will say that solutions must be found quickly. That is what has happened. We must have a

serious debate. We cannot control every event until 2030 or 2050. We must discuss what we can and what we must do right now.

We have to deal with the problem: companies are no longer able to provide secure pensions for their employees. An employee no longer does the same job for an entire lifetime. People leave their jobs and change jobs often. We have to find other ways. If the provinces are not yet prepared to enhance the public pension funds, that is, the CPP and the QPP, we have to establish real competition for the plans being proposed by the Conservative Party.

[*English*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the leader of the Liberal Party, I was very pleased when I first heard of the Prime Minister's remarks in Davos. I saw headlines which read "Prime Minister's Retirement Plan" and I was excited because I thought it meant he was retiring. I am one of the many Canadians who have no pension at all. I have been self-employed all my life. I have put a little bit in RRSPs now and then when I can afford it. I know how hard it is to ask employees to voluntarily set aside money for retirement. The voluntary nature of this pooled plan and the fact that it will be managed by the private sector speak against its benefits.

Does the hon. member think we can expand CPP right now to deal with those people who do not have pensions?

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Mr. Speaker, I hope we can. The CPP is a joint plan. It is run jointly by the federal government and the provinces. I agree with the hon. member that we have to recognize that the economy of the past, where people went into the workforce after high school or university and thought their jobs were for life and that they had secure pensions, has changed. Thirty years ago, who would have thought that Nortel would be gone, or that companies we relied on and thought would be there would not be there?

I see my colleague from Sudbury looking at me. When I first started working in Ontario in the 1970s there were 18,000 hourly employees at Inco. There were 15,000 at Hilton Works in Hamilton. Those days are gone. We have to recognize the need for change. The public sector needs to step up with a flexible plan. Until we get the provinces onside, the best we can do is to have some sort of competition for the proposed private plan. We have to recognize that we still have a long way to go to get to a better situation for our current workers and future retirees.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have tremendous respect for the work of the member across the way.

The pooled registered pension plan has been agreed upon by all of the provinces and all of the territories. This legislation here in the House would allow the provinces and territories to continue to make that plan better.

Is the member going to allow his party to vote in favour, along with the provinces and territories, for this PRPP?

*Government Orders*

●(1815)

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member is one of the members opposite who has respect for what I have been doing over my political life. As I hear from some others, I am not sure that respect is broadly shared by the other side. I appreciate the comment.

We will be deciding as a caucus what our response will be to the legislation. We do not think this is the great, big, bold step as it has been described by her party. We certainly do not think it is going to provide a resolution to the current challenges facing this generation of workers and the next generation of senior citizens.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to be here today to speak to Bill C-25, the pooled registered pension plans act.

Before I start, I want to thank the Minister of State (Finance), the member for Macleod, for his work on this in close cooperation with the provincial ministers of finance. It is no easy task when we are told to look at the retirement packages that Canadians will have and what they will be able to spend in their retirement years. We want to ensure that we are able to provide that. We want to ensure that they have the tools to provide that, too.

I think the PRPP would do a good job. I think if all parties put away the rhetoric and the verbal diarrhea we have just heard and looked at Bill C-25, they would see that this is not a bad way to move forward. It is a reasonable and prudent way, considering today's environment. Bill C-25 would provide a pension plan that individuals could take on. It would provide a pension plan that small companies could offer to their employees.

Last weekend, I attended a Chamber of Commerce function in Nipawin. The guest speaker was Eric Anderson, a very good speaker who talked about the resource sector in Saskatchewan. He talked about all the opportunities and about the labour shortage. Saskatchewan will face a labour shortage as it sees expansion in potash, uranium, gold, and oil and gas, and the re-emergence of the forestry sector.

I have to thank Brad Wall and his Saskatchewan government for doing such a great job in allowing that growth to happen. Under the NDP government, that would never happen. We have seen people leaving this province under the NDP government. Under the Saskatchewan Party government, we have actually seen people come back. We are now trying to draw in people from all over Canada and around the world to work in the great province of Saskatchewan.

However, because we are so short of labour, the smaller companies are trying to figure out how they are going to be able to retain employees. How do they compete against the big, multinational companies? How do they compete against government organizations? How do they take a mechanic they have seen through to journeyman status and keep him or her in their organization?

When I worked for Flexi-Coil and Case New Holland, talking to our agriculture dealers, that was a common problem. How do they keep that mechanic in their dealerships, after having spent time and effort getting him or her trained to understand their equipment? That was a big problem.

The PRPP is one tool that would allow the employer to do that. I think it is a great tool. Small businesses do not have the ability to take on big pension plans. They do not have the resources. They do not have the fiduciary capacity. They do not have the administration. They cannot afford it. If they only have four or five employees, or one or two employees, they cannot hire a person to administer a pension plan. They have to be a certain size in order to get economies of scale. That is the beauty of this plan: it would allow a pension to be built. It would allow the pooling of resources to get economies of scale.

Another nice thing about this program is it would actually allow a third party to come in and administer the plan. The employer would not have the burden of hiring somebody to administer a pension plan. It would allow the third party to coordinate and work through this pension plan with that employee.

As an advantage over existing pension plans, if an employee decided to change jobs, the plan would follow the employee. If I, as a mechanic, decided that I wanted to take a job at a different dealership, I could take it with me. It is my money. It would follow me wherever I went. That is a great plan. It would allow the retention of employees. It would allow an employer to say, "I have a pension plan here that you can contribute to". Yet it would allow the employee the freedom to change jobs and that pension plan would follow him or her. It is a great idea.

This plan is the federal portion of it. Of course, the cooperation of the provinces would be needed in order to see this plan move forward and be implemented throughout Canada. I am sure we would have that cooperation, considering the amount of work the member for Macleod, the Minister of State (Finance), has put into the plan.

He has consulted with the provincial ministers of finance over and over and over again. He has talked to business groups, employees and employers about options that they could look at to provide that stability for people during their retirement days. This would be a good result.

●(1820)

One of the arguments was that we should just raise CPP. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said that one thing about raising CPP is that it kills jobs. In parts of Canada, killing jobs would be very serious. In my area, we actually have a shortage of labour. We are sitting at about a 4% or 5% unemployment rate. We need everybody we can get. However, some areas are not that lucky. We do not want to kill jobs. We want to see jobs continue to grow. We still want to see jobs and people employed in different regions of the country.

I know the opposition members do not want to kill jobs, so I think they can understand. When we talk to third parties, professors and experts in the industry, we do not want to raise CPP. That is not the option in this day and age that is correct.

*Government Orders*

However, if we do not have that option what else do we have? Employers say that they cannot afford to provide a pension. They cannot afford the administrative costs. They say that they cannot afford to hire someone to administer a pension. Some businesses are not big enough and do not have enough economies of scale to pay for a pension plan.

This is why PRPPs came about. It is a good idea. It is a good cross balance. It would allow employees to have that benefit and would allow employers to offer that benefit if they chose. They could even contribute financially to it. Again, it would be up to the employer and the employee, their relationship and their benefit package. It would give them that flexibility to move forward. It would allow the employees to have a few more tools in their basket for what they can use for retirement. They could have an RRSP, a pension and a PRPP, if their company offers a PRPP. They would have a lot of options. I think it is just being prudent.

It also would encourage people to save for retirement, which is something all of us have been told we should be doing. We all know that the younger we start the better off we will be when we come to retirement age. We should always keep encouraging members of society, especially young members, to be saving more and more as we move forward.

When I look at the intent of the PRPP and how it would work, and when I see how it would benefit the employees, this is a very positive step forward.

There has been a lot of confusion today, which is really too bad because this bill should have intelligent debate. It should be debated on the merits of it, not on a wild range of speculation and hip hurrah over other things. We need to talk about the PRPP and refocus on what this legislation is actually about.

We need to look at the situation as if we were in that employee's shoes. We are in our mid-40s and wondering what retirement benefits are available. We might have RRSPs, which we could maximize on or do the best on that. However, we know a lot of Canadians are not doing that. We have been paying into CPP so we know that will be there. We have GIS, which the government actually raised, so we know that will be there. We have OAS, old age security. We know that is in the works. We understand there are some challenges with OAS but again we will discuss that at a future date. However, that is not this bill. This bill is the PRPP, the pooled registered pension plan. That is what we are discussing here today.

I encourage other members to put away all the noise and focus on the PRPP. We need to ensure we get a proper piece of legislation that moves forward and actually works for employees and employers. If we were to agree to put politics aside and just focus on the employer and employee, we would actually look at this bill in a different light. When people turn 60 or 65, or when they decide to retire, what will they have in benefits? If the PRPP is in that basket, 15 or 20 years from now they will be thanking us for voting in favour of this legislation.

I think this is great legislation. I again thank the member for Macleod, the Minister of State for Finance. I also thank the parliamentary secretary for all her hard work on this file. I know she has worked very hard on the background to this. All the members of

the finance committee on both sides of the line have also worked hard in different consultations, too.

I encourage members to focus on the pooled registered pension plan, on Bill C-25. We need to get this legislation through and, once we get it through, then we can get on to other business. Members can be reassured that their constituents will thank them for doing it.

● (1825)

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, several years ago, a private company that I used to work for allowed certain employees to withdraw their pension funds and invest them into the stock market or wherever they wanted to. That was a lot like what the Conservative government wants to do today with this PRPP, invest money in the stock market. It was a substantial amount, several hundred thousands of dollars.

The stock market goes up and down and in the employee's case the stock market went down and he lost all of his investment. Today, at the age of 63 or 64, this former employee with a big pension is now working, not because he wants to but because he has to.

My question is for the member for Prince Albert. Why do the Conservatives-Reformists enjoy watching seniors live in poverty?

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Mr. Speaker, that type of language does not work necessarily for moving this legislation forward.

It is actually very interesting that the member talks about this because in the PRPP there can be third party providers and it can be a variety of different agencies. It could be a bank or a credit union. However, when people sit down with that provider, they will have the option of looking at the types of investments they want to put their PRPP in.

Depending on their age, people may be looking at different risk levels as they invest. For example, people who are a little younger may be willing to sustain a little loss and ride through the markets for the longer term. They may want to take on more risk. People who are getting closer to retirement may say that that is their nest egg and will not want to submit it to a lot of risk. They may put it in a portfolio that will actually have very little risk. That portfolio may not be stock market related, it might be government bonds or other things.

The market does what a market does. It goes up and it goes down. We all know that and we have all seen it. We tell our kids that. To try to predict the market is a very dangerous game.

I think people need to work with a good, proper third party person who is an expert in this field and who can help manage that risk so that they can actually get that value out of their money when they go to retire.



**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about confusion, rhetoric and fluff. The member talked about the plan specifically to the official opposition, which was about raising EI premiums, and went on at length about being the job killer that it is, yet earlier this month premiums did just that, they went up.

I was wondering why the member let that happen under his watch if he truly feels that they are job killers?

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Mr. Speaker, I guess the hon. member was not listening. I was actually talking about CPP and what would happen if we were to raise CPP, which is that it would actually kill jobs. That is why we did not want to see that.

Again, in looking at what was in my speech and what I said, I was very clear. In talking to groups like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business about raising CPP, they actually said that it would reduce jobs. That is why we did not go that route.

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for clarifying exactly what this is about.

I would like to know, from someone from Saskatchewan, what the importance of portability is in this pension plan where people are able to move from one job to another. Is that important to the people of Saskatchewan?

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to have a question in regard to the bill. I must commend to member for sticking to the topic, which is Bill C-25, the PRPP.

In Saskatchewan, the importance is very huge. We do see employees change jobs, one to another, especially the younger they are. If people have a job when they are 25 and start a PRPP, they can keep moving that. That versatility is with them as they change jobs or maybe even change career paths. The PRPP is theirs until they retire. That is the beauty of this legislation.

• (1830)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Prince Albert will have five minutes remaining for questions and comments when the House next resumes debate on this question.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back in the House after our Christmas recess and to be able to address and speak with my colleagues.

Just last week in Davos, the Prime Minister was singing the praises of Canada's system of banking regulation. Ironically, this comes at the same time as the government is all too happy to watch an important cornerstone of Canada's regulatory regime weaken due to the failure of the government to force banks to utilize the dispute resolution mechanism of the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments.

### Adjournment Proceedings

In October last year, TD followed RBC's lead in opting out of the OBSI dispute resolution mechanism and instead moved to using a private law firm hand-picked by the bank to resolve complaints that could not be fixed by the in-house resolution system.

The government spins this decision to let banks leave OBSI and deal with disputes through private firms as allowing choice in the marketplace. Choice for who? It is clear it is not investors, consumers or small businesses. These groups are stuck with the dispute resolution mechanism chosen for them by the banks. In fact, it is impossible to find members of those communities who support the government's position.

The Canadian Foundation for Advancement of Investor Rights sent an open letter to the Minister of Finance calling on the government to make the use of OBSI for dispute resolution mandatory saying that:

One single dispute resolution service provider is necessary in order to avoid fragmentation, inconsistencies, serious potential conflicts of interest, complainant (client) confusion and enable the detection of systemic or widespread issues.

The Consumers Council of Canada says that the withdrawal of TD and RBC from the banking side of OBSI:

—threatens the health of the system of dispute resolution and redress that has distinguished Canada during the current period of global economic disorder.

Instead of protecting their customers, the choice that the government is championing is for the banks, and when the banks are confronted with the choice between a comprehensive dispute resolution mechanism or a Bay Street law firm that is more interested in keeping the banks business than in protecting consumers and small businesses, who will it choose?

In October of last year, the same month as TD was allowed to walk away from OBSI, Canada signed a G20 accord on handling banking complaints which stated:

Recourse to an independent redress process should be available to address complaints that are not efficiently resolved via the financial services providers and authorized agents internal dispute resolution mechanisms.

How can the current process be independent if the banks get to choose who hears customers' complaints? Regulation should not be administered by Bay Street law firms on an issue that is as fundamental to the proper functioning of the economy as the banking sector. Consumers and small businesses will never be able to believe that their complaints will be properly addressed if the banks are stacking the odds in their own favour.

It is time for the government to match its words on banking regulation with action. The global economic recovery will rely on consumers and small businesses having confidence in the economy and the banking sector more generally. In order to ensure confidence in the banking sector, small businesses and consumers must have access to a single, independent dispute resolution service like OBSI.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned previously in the House, our Conservative government has shown a clear commitment to protecting Canadian consumers, particularly when it comes to financial and banking sectors. We understand that Canadian families use financial products and services every day, be it using a credit card when they are shopping, cashing a cheque, making a deposit at a bank or paying off their mortgages.

We believe Canadians deserve a system that is safe, secure and fair. That is why since 2006 we have enacted numerous measures to support consumers of financial products, measures that, unfortunately, the NDP actually opposed and voted against.

The list includes measures like: protecting consumers with new credit card rules; bringing in a code of conduct for the credit and debit card industry to help small businesses respond to unfair practices; banning negative option billing for financial products; and shortening the cheque holding period. Furthermore, we have made mortgage insurance more transparent, understandable and affordable. We have also created a task force on financial literacy to help consumers make the right financial choices and we have done much more.

In budget 2011, the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, we built on that record with more consumer-friendly measures that I will cite: banning unsolicited credit card checks; moving to protect consumers of prepaid cards; and beginning to implement the task force on financial literacy's recommendations. Again, the NDP voted against every one of those measures. In fact, with respect to the issue of the NDP member for Sudbury and what he asks about today, he voted against a very important solution. Specifically, he voted against the Sustaining Canada's Economic Recovery Act.

Currently the Bank Act requires all banks to have dedicated procedures and personnel in place to address consumer concerns and complaints. In addition, it also requires that banks belong to a third party dispute resolution body. However, there is a wide variation in terms of the procedures that are used, a concern shared by many consumers and our Conservative government.

To better protect Canadian consumers, the Sustaining Canada's Economic Recovery Act will force banks to belong to government approved, independent third party bodies, which the member of the NDP failed to recognize. It will also establish uniform regulatory standards for internal complaint procedures and give the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada the authority to monitor and enforce compliance. These are things perhaps the member of the NDP missed when he voted against such an important measure.

This will ensure that consumers receive consistent treatment and the highest level of protection. Despite the NDP opposition, we have passed that landmark legislation and are working to finalize regulations. Perhaps that explanation will allow the member to think more prudently when voting again on topics that might secure some protection for our Canadian consumers.

● (1835)

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, with all that, I would also like to welcome my colleague back to our usual debates in the evening on this topic.

She talked about a long list of things that the Conservatives have done, but all of those things have been proven ineffective time and time again. However, the OBSI is an organization that has been around for a decade or so. It has already been in existence. The government needs to ensure that this organization, independent from the banks, has the necessary regulation in place so we do not see further banks walking away and so that we can protect our small businesses and consumers when they have a dispute with the big banks.

Right now the government is favouring the big banks by allowing them to choose Bay Street law firms over independent organizations that actually protect consumers and small businesses.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Through you, Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a moment to say hello to my colleague across the way. Unfortunately, he is a lot further away this time. He used to sit closer to me so we could hear one another very well.

Nevertheless, while the NDP likes to talk about protecting consumers, its record is very clear. NDP members have voted against every measure to protect consumers that has been introduced by our Conservative government. They have also, unfortunately, attacked consumers and families by opposing and voting against every tax cut to help consumers. For example, the GST reduction helps Canadians every day when they make purchases for themselves and their families.

In fact, the NDP wants to take more and more money out of the wallets of Canadian consumers. Even worse, one frontrunner from the NDP leadership, Brian Topp, is touring Canada right now demanding that Canadian families pay more tax. He said:

The only time we ever hear our current political leaders utter the word "tax," it's immediately followed with "cut." That has to change.

I hope that this higher spending, higher taxing will stop. That kind of thing will destroy our Canadian families and destroy our economy.

\* \* \*

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

#### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on September 22, 2011, the government imposed a new communications protocol for the RCMP, which stipulates that all RCMP officers must consult the Minister of Public Safety and obtain his approval for any non-operational communications. For any major operational events, all communications must be vetted by the public safety department before they can be made public.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

This makes no sense. One task cannot be separated into parts without affecting another. Communications are an integral part of the work of the RCMP and the government should not be interfering in RCMP business.

When I asked a question about this on November 21, 2011, the parliamentary secretary's only response was that imposing a communications protocol was standard procedure and normal protocol and that I was smearing the noble institution that is the RCMP. That response was completely condescending towards the opposition and towards Canadians.

The problem is that the Conservative government wants to politicize the RCMP, which will now have to follow the political direction given. The RCMP is an institution that defends the rule of law and our democracy. When the RCMP takes political direction, the rule of law is subverted. Instead of accepting the problem and trying to solve it, the government prefers to control RCMP communications to avoid or cover up scandals. This obviously should not be the government's *modus operandi*. It should instead agree to be accountable and should be prepared to tackle problems head-on and solve them over the long term.

From this point forward, the RCMP must also flag opportunities for Public Safety Canada ministerial events. This protocol is also designed so that the minister can interfere in the RCMP's public events. They refer to this protocol as a ministerial event proposal.

A former assistant to the deputy minister mentioned that this new protocol requires a major shift in attitude within the RCMP. This just proves that this is not a standard policy for the RCMP, which is not used to such political interference.

All Canadians are aware of the latest developments in the RCMP female employee harassment affair. The commissioner must have the independence necessary to show Canadians that the RCMP will be completely transparent and accountable in dealing with this matter. This political interference will just give Canadians the sense that the Minister of Public Safety is trying to hide something.

The Conservative government said that prior departmental authorization, which must be obtained before the commissioner can speak to parliamentarians, is a policy that dates back to the last Liberal government. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Liberal policy simply said that the commissioner had to notify the minister of any statement that might be made before the committee and any discussion that took place during a committee meeting. There was no requirement for the commissioner to seek the minister's permission to meet with parliamentarians.

Is the commissioner free to talk to and meet with people or not? The government has to clarify this for Canadians. Once again: will the minister respect the RCMP's independence and do away with this restrictive protocol?

[*English*]

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying how much our government respects and honours the RCMP and the work that it does, as do all Canadians. We are very proud of the work that the RCMP does. In fact, there are few

symbols that are more recognizable and intrinsic to Canadian identity than the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The main role of the RCMP is to enforce Canadian law and keep our streets and communities safe. However, like any other agency of government, it reports to Parliament through a minister of the Crown, namely the Minister of Public Safety. The public safety portfolio is comprised of five agencies in total. The other four are the Canadian Border Services Agency, CSIS, Correctional Service Canada and the National Parole Board of Canada. This portfolio structure allows the department to achieve better integration among federal organizations dealing with national security, emergency management, law enforcement, corrections, crime prevention and borders.

As is common practice with any such portfolio structure, Public Safety Canada works hand in hand with the portfolio agencies as well as other government departments to ensure that communications are well coordinated, effectively and efficiently managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of our public. Indeed, all large organizations, government or private sector, need to have strong communication policies in place in order to ensure the seamless flow of communication in a timely and accurate manner, as is the case between Public Safety Canada and the RCMP.

Our government takes issue with the attempts by the NDP member for Châteauguay—Saint-Constant to imply that we are introducing some sort of strict or unusual communication policy in an effort to “muzzle the RCMP”. That is far from the truth. Far from this being a document that was brought down with a hammer and set in stone, the communications protocol was fully endorsed by the RCMP senior management and clearly sets out in writing the opportunity for ongoing collaboration, monitoring and evaluation. It was put in place to ensure consistent communications for major events, announcements and speaking engagements.

I would suggest that most large organizations and government departments have protocols in place that ensure consistent and timely messaging, as well as an effective strategic communication plan. It is particularly important for an agency like the RCMP which often deals with very sensitive and urgent matters of national interest. This protocol also recognizes that there might be times when the urgency of an event may require a divergence from communications protocol. Again, most organizations have a crisis communications plan in place for just such instances.

In conclusion, this protocol was signed in a mutual agreement between Public Safety Canada and the RCMP. It allows for ongoing dialogue and adjustments, as necessary, and it will serve to support the vital work the RCMP plays in helping us fulfill our commitment to Canadians to build safe, resilient communities. Our government is proud to say that we stand behind our national police force and we will continue to support ongoing efforts to strengthen and modernize this invaluable institution.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine:** Mr. Speaker, ever since the Conservatives have been in power, transparency and accountability have not really been on their list of priorities. Whether we are talking about the budget or departmental policies or directives, the Conservatives are less and less accountable. They devise their policies in such a way as to appear to answer parliamentarians' questions, but in fact, these policies are so opaque that the result is a total lack of transparency. That is what they are trying to do with the RCMP, by muzzling their communications and preventing them from meeting with parliamentarians.

When the Conservatives were in the opposition, during the sponsorship scandal in particular, the hon. member for Crowfoot, the current chair of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, mentioned the importance of the RCMP's independence from political power. What happened? Now that they are in power, this independence for the RCMP is no longer justifiable? Why does the government want to muzzle the RCMP to the detriment of the government's key policy on accountability?

[*English*]

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner:** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are extremely proud of the RCMP and the police forces across Canada. That is why they gave Conservatives a strong mandate last May. We are the only party that consistently invests in front-line police officers. We have taken decisive actions to support the work of the RCMP and to ensure that it has the tools it needs to do its jobs.

The communications protocol between Public Safety Canada and the RCMP is exactly that, an important tool for communicating with Canadians. Effective information sharing between Public Safety Canada and the RCMP ensures that both are well placed to get information to all Canadians.

Let me clear. There is no interference between the government and the RCMP on operational or investigative matters. This would be inappropriate. The accusations of the opposition, somehow implying that, are completely inappropriate and wrong. However, the protocol that we have in place allows the RCMP to communicate in the most effective way possible. We remain committed to supporting the RCMP and to helping keep Canadians safe.

• (1850)

## CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to start this debate by acknowledging the changing relationship between Canada and the United States on the border in the last number of years. That is why I rose in the House of Commons to ask the minister about a 29-point plan that was being put in place with the United States with a lot of secrecy. In fact, there was very little consultation with businesses and other organizations or groups. One could go online and make a submission, but only 1,000 people actually visited the website, and very few contributed to that discussion. It was done in a vacuum. Therefore, there could not be the debate and exchange of information that we would normally have at committees to actually bring the issue, which is much more complex and involved, to the table in a much more open and accountable way for Canadian citizens.

The problem we have had with the United States over the last number of years is the approach the government has taken to Washington. We have had a changing relationship since 9/11. There has been a lot of contestation about the safety and security of the northern border. Unfortunately, the government made a very strategic error in its relationship with the U.S. when we were challenged over being able to protect the border against not only smugglers but also crime, potential terrorism and similar issues. The government agreed that it was a problem, but there was no evidence to that degree, especially given the types of events that have been happening at our border on a regular basis.

When Hillary Clinton charged that the 9/11 terrorists came from Canada, we did not have an official objection to that statement. We contested it, but we did not have the Prime Minister there, nor did we call in the ambassador. There were other people, such as Lieberman from the United States, another high-profile politician, and Napolitano, the director of Homeland Security.

Over the last number of years there has been a concerted effort by the southern states—and I have been to Washington and governors' conferences and a whole series of different meetings—to say that the northern border is a big threat, more so than the southern border—this despite the fact the southern border is shared with Mexico, where thousands of people flood into the United States back and forth every single day, and despite the fact that some of its areas and regions are controlled by drug lords and it has no police. The government accepted the argument, and the consequence has been the thickening of the border.

In fact, it has done things that are very puzzling and it has celebrated them. For example, we have had no military ships on the Great Lakes since the War of 1812. It was a signed treaty. It is true that there were patrols, the Coast Guard, police vessels and a series of others, but the government celebrated the ripping up of a treaty for one of the busiest causeways in terms of shipping traffic and pleasure craft and allowed the U.S. to introduce gunboats that fire 1,200 bullets a minute. The government celebrated the ending of a very positive treaty. We do not even know why it is necessary to be able to fire 1,200 bullets a minute.

The consequence has been the thickening of the border and a loss of business and trade that is expected to be in the billions of dollars. The government celebrates those types of events.

What is interesting about this whole issue is that the United States attempted at one point to put 40 gunboat training staging areas on the Great Lakes. The government did not even make a submission on time against that plan. Although lead casings and bullets will go in there and will affect our trade once again, it did not even make a submission to the U.S. government.

That is why our border is thickening. That is why we are losing jobs.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to hear the member opposite talk about gunboats and situations on the Great Lakes and the U.S. trade with Canada. It looks as though the U.S. is ready to invade Canada, or something like that.

However, I am happy to hear from the member, because he represents Windsor, which is right next to the border. I am very happy to hear that he has been to the U.S.A. many times. He keeps going there and he keeps hearing from the governors, as he said, and I hope he stands up for Canada. If Americans say everything is coming from Canada, I hope he stands up and defends Canada. Instead of talking about this nonsense of gunboats and bullets and everything else, he should say to the Americans that we value their friendship.

The member comes from a region where he should stand up for business. He should see how many trucks are going up and down doing business and he should be proud of the fact that so much business is being done between our two countries, business that is prosperous for both countries.

Of course we recognize that the NDP will kill jobs. One minute members talk about creating jobs, and the next minute about the thickening of the border. This agreement that was signed between the Prime Minister and President Obama was to do exactly what the member is complaining about, which is to make the borders open so that we do not have concerns about security as well as to create competitiveness so that jobs could be created and continue without unnecessary delay.

I would tell the member that these are two separate countries. This is Canada and that is the U.S.A. The U.S.A. has every right to do whatever it wants to do for its own security, just as we have every right to do what we want to do in Canada. The only way we will solve this problem is to sit down and talk with each other and come to an agreement that respects both countries' sovereignty.

Therefore, I want to assure the member and every Canadian that the agreement we are signing will protect Canadian interests and Canadian privacy laws. By the way, the member is talking about not really having any consultation. I hope, because trade is very important for the member, that he took the time to send in a submission as well. I hope he has done that. He says this was private and was done under secrecy. There was nothing secret about it. I can assure every Canadian that we will maintain and protect the Privacy Act according to Canadian laws, but we will be working together to

ensure that the border has no delays. It is for jobs, jobs, jobs, as this government promised to do during the election campaign.

• (1855)

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, 40% of daily trade with the United States happens at the border in my riding. I know it very well, and the member does not even understand the implications of some of the policies that are being put in. The privacy laws and the complications for entry to and exit from this country are going to be devastating, and the extra issues with regard to security for threats that do not exist are going to thicken the border again.

When the government came to power, we had a manufacturing trade deficit of \$18 billion. It now stands at \$80 billion. That is the deficit in manufacturing trade. Conservatives are costing us jobs by signing these agreements, because they agree with the U.S. on the notion that Canada is a danger and a threat and that the issues on the border had to be addressed by thickening it with more security, more equipment and more types of intrusions. That is the exact opposite of what we need to have happen. We need to make sure that the free flow of goods of services will take place. Signing deals like this in secrecy, without consultation and an ongoing process, has only thickened the border. The evidence is the fact of our trade deficit ballooning under their watch.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, I am just amazed. Did the member say something about Canada being a danger to the U.S.A.? I do not know what he is talking about, but I can ask all Canadians, including anyone who visits the U.S.A. regularly. No U.S. citizen has ever said there is any threat from Canada. As a matter of fact everybody, including myself, and I have been at Congress, has talked about how they value Canada's contribution to security for the border.

I need to remind the member that we share this continent. We have the longest undefended border in the world. Also, he rightly pointed out the figure of 40%. Anything the NDP wants to do would kill jobs, jobs, jobs. That is its national policy. This government's policy is to create jobs, jobs and jobs. Therefore, we will support this agreement. I hope members opposite will see sense and support it.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 6:59 p.m.)



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