



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 146 • NUMBER 130 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 30, 2012

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 30, 2012

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will start with the singing of our national anthem, led today by the hon. member for Saint-Jean.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

THE HOLOCAUST

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ind. Cons.): Mr. Speaker, 70 years ago, the duly elected leader and government of a modern country, known for its contributions to the arts and culture, edicted mass murder of an unimaginable scale. The world was shocked to learn of meticulous state records documenting millions who perished, horrendous evidence that evil resides everywhere when left unchecked due to apathy and indifference. The goal was genocide, to obliterate Jews in all countries under Nazi control.

As the storm clouds of rhetoric and denial gather against Jews throughout the world, we stand together to remember those whose lives were annihilated in the Holocaust. We stand to condemn those acts of genocide and those who would deny the very atrocities that caused millions to perish at the hand of their fellow man.

We stand as one people, under the banner of humanity, united in our support to solemnly pledge, this day and forever, never again.

* * *

BRING BACK THE SALMON

Mr. Chris Alexander (Ajax—Pickering, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recall a wonderful event. On April 11, on the shores of Duffins Creek, in the city of Pickering, I had the pleasure to support, with the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Bring Back the Salmon, which brought the community together to restock Duffins Creek with Atlantic salmon yearlings.

It was an inspiring day for all of us: for Mayor Dave Ryan, for the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters' executive director

Angelo Lombardo, Ontario Power Generation employees, Sir Sandford Fleming College employees, and provincial fish and wildlife officials to see students from Holy Redeemer Catholic School and Pine Ridge Secondary School release Atlantic salmon into the wild.

French explorers dubbed Duffins Creek the “Rivière au saumon”. For centuries before that it was home to large aboriginal settlements dependent on fish. In the late 1800s habitat destruction and overfishing sent these stocks into decline. Today, since May 2006, Bring Back the Salmon has put 2.5 million young Atlantic salmon back into Duffins Creek, Cobourg Brook and the Credit River.

This is another great example of our government's dedication to the principles of conservation and it is real action to preserve Canada's natural habitat.

* * *

[Translation]

PATRIOTES DE LONGUEUIL 1999 SOCCER TEAM

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in the House today to speak about the Patriotes de Longueuil.

As members are aware, Longueuil was hit with extremely heavy rains yesterday evening, but that did not stop the Patriotes de Longueuil 1999 soccer team from holding its first wine, cheese and sushi tasting at Christie's in Boucherville.

This extremely successful event helped the team raise \$5,610. Thanks to the support of a number members of the community, the boys' team will be able to live its dream of competing in the prestigious Mediterranean International Cup from March 26 to 31, 2013, in Catalonia, Spain. A number of major professional soccer players have made a name for themselves at this event in the past.

Congratulations to Guerline Déodat on her involvement, without which yesterday's event would not have been possible.

Good luck to the Patriotes de Longueuil.

I know that their dedication will bring them to new heights in 2013.

*Statements by Members**[English]***ROYAL CANADIAN AIR CADETS**

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “to learn, to serve, to advance.” These words are the motto of the young Canadians I met this past weekend. On Saturday, I had the great privilege of meeting many remarkable Royal Canadian air cadets in my riding during the 3 Striker Squadron's 8th annual inspections and awards presentations in Strathroy.

These young men and women are Canada's future. Marksmanship, first aid, survival, music, aircraft identification, navigation, aerospace, communication, meteorology and airport operations are only some of the skills that these young men and women learn. This program is not only training air cadets, but is shaping our future CEOs, leaders and entrepreneurs.

I would like to applaud the many young cadets in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, and all across Canada, for their hard work and dedication to our great country.

* * *

AFRICA DAY

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Africa Day is an annual commemoration of the 1963 founding of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union.

The 53 member states work together to address common challenges. They have dedicated themselves to creating an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.

On Africa Day, we pause to recognize the people and the promise of Africa. By 2020, fully 70% of the African population will be under 20 years old. Inspiring and empowering young people is thus critical to Africa's future.

[Translation]

Today we are celebrating Africa Day at the Government of Canada Conference Centre. All of my colleagues in the House and the Senate who are members of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association are invited to attend this event after 6:00 p.m. or immediately after the votes.

You will be able to taste African dishes and meet members of the diaspora and African ambassadors, all while helping Africa build its future.

* * *

*[English]***BIRKDALE ART IN THE PARK**

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, June 2, the Midland Park Community Association is hosting its second annual Birkdale Art in the Park, 2012. This outdoor art show and sale showcases many of the talented artists of Scarborough. It is held outside the Birkdale Community Centre in the lovely Midland Park area of my riding of Scarborough Centre.

This event allows artists to connect with the community. It is a terrific afternoon for anyone looking to browse fine art and crafts such as paintings, mixed media, jewellery and sculpture. As an artist

myself, I look forward to seeing all of the work on display. I hope to speak with each artist personally about the pieces. I would also like to encourage our youth to explore their talents and creativity. That is why I am inviting parents to drop by my table with their children to sit down and paint their own individual works of art.

Lastly, I would like to thank Mr. David Barnes and the Midland Park Community Association for organizing this terrific community event. I look forward to seeing everybody out this Saturday.

* * *

● (1410)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a red-letter day for 6,500 disabled veterans in this country. After a five and a half year legal challenge, Dennis Manuge and his legal team of Peter Driscoll and Dan Wallace of McInnes Cooper in Halifax finally won what was rightfully theirs.

In 2006, the NDP moved a motion to eliminate the SISIP clawback. Unfortunately, the Conservatives at the time voted against it and told these veterans to go to court. That is what they did. Thankfully, the government realized that it would not win that case, and now these disabled veterans will get the money they so rightfully deserve.

I personally want to thank Dennis Manuge from my riding, the lead plaintiff in this, for being the hero for those veterans across the country. I also want to thank all of the individual members of Parliament who convinced the government not to challenge this decision. Sadly, it had to go to court in the first place. Hopefully, this will be a lesson to all members of Parliament, now and in the future, that disabled veterans should never have to go to court to get the benefits they so rightfully deserve.

* * *

NATIONAL ANAPHYLAXIS MONTH

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to bring attention to national anaphylaxis month. Many Canadians live with a severe allergic condition that causes them to pay constant attention to what they eat and even sometimes what they touch. They live every day with the worry of being only one mistake away from a potentially life-threatening accident.

To raise awareness for this cause, four Mississauga MPs recently had the privilege of taking part in the Take Action Against Reactions five-kilometre walk in Erindale Park in my constituency. Funds generated from the walk went toward research and education for anaphylaxis, allergies and asthma. There is much we can and should do to support those who have life-threatening allergies, but we can all start by learning how to recognize the early signs of a reaction and how to administer an EpiPen.

Statements by Members

I would like to thank all of those involved who made the walk a success, including Debbie Bruce, who continues to raise awareness of this important cause. I urge all Canadians to learn more about anaphylaxis and special dietary needs.

* * *

PENN TORAH

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, May 27, I was honoured to attend the dedication of the Penn Torah at Temple Shalom in my riding of Winnipeg South Centre. Temple Shalom is the only reform synagogue in Winnipeg, and it is celebrating its 25th year in its current building in my riding.

The Penn Torah is the first Torah scroll ever written in Winnipeg and the first ever written by a female Canadian *soferet* or scribe. Irma Penn dedicated the last two years to this painstaking endeavour, ensuring that every letter is accurate and readable, that there is equal weight to the black lettering on the white parchment, black fire on white fire. The *soferet* must have a keen eye, strong intellect, incredible focus, great discipline and tremendous patience, and she has these attributes.

Today, we congratulate Irma Penn and Temple Shalom for this new creation, the Penn Torah, which symbolizes a renewal of dedication to Judaism and to our community.

* * *

[Translation]

LAURE FRAPPIER AND RAYMOND POISSON

Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to salute the work of an exceptional woman in my riding. Sixty-year-old Laure Frappier has been an super-volunteer since the age of nine. Even losing her sight in 1998 hardly slowed her down.

After a complicated rehabilitation process, she embraced new challenges, eager to serve her community. She went back to university in 2003 and earned a bachelor's degree in psychosocial intervention. In 2007, she founded Contact'L, an organization that helps women in distress.

I would like to congratulate Ms. Frappier on her dedication and generosity. Thanks to her, many women find their way to a life with dignity.

I would also like to congratulate another of my constituents. On May 1, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI appointed Raymond Poisson as auxiliary bishop. Father Poisson was the rector of the Sainte-Anne of Varennes Basilica and the pastor for Varennes, Verchères, Contrecoeur and Calixa-Lavallée. I am delighted for him, but at the same time, we will be sad to see him go.

I wish Father Poisson continued success on the other side of the river.

● (1415)

[English]

RESTORING RAIL SERVICE LEGISLATION

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the leader of the third party has not learned a thing since his time as premier of Ontario. As premier he had a proven record of failure when it came to the economy, with large deficits, high taxes and record unemployment. It seems that he wants to see Canada go down the same dark path.

Last night the House of Commons stayed late into the night to pass legislation to get CP Rail running again. A strike halting the trains at CP Rail could cost the Canadian economy over \$500 million a week and put thousands of Canadian jobs at risk. We have pulled out all the stops to protect these jobs and Canada's economy, but the leader of the Liberal Party is threatening to delay the bill at the next stage.

We urge the leader of the third party to do the right thing for the Canadian economy and promise that the Liberals will not delay this critical bill.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today the Native Women's Association of Canada and Justice for Girls released a report that documents the impacts of intergenerational residential school trauma on criminalized women and girls.

The cross-country consultations entitled "Arrest the Legacy: From Residential Schools to Prisons" included over 300 first nations, Métis and Inuit women who have been in custody, as well as community and justice sector workers.

Aboriginal women are overrepresented in the Canadian prison system due to poverty, violence, mental health issues and multi-generational abuse.

This report includes several recommendations to improve the lives of aboriginal women and girls, such as alternatives to incarceration, increased support for community-led healing, and supportive housing.

The first step for the Conservative government is to listen to the research that comes from organizations such as the Native Women's Association of Canada. The second step is for the government to act to stop the devastating impacts of Bill C-10, to reverse the cuts to research and healing programming and to eradicate poverty among aboriginal women.

The Canadian government is leaving aboriginal women in the cold. It is time to respect first nations, Métis and Inuit women instead of criminalizing them.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP had no choice but to visit the oil sands after he described this resource as a “disease”. He clearly stated that he does not support the oil sands and would like to see their development halted, which would mean the loss of thousands of jobs.

Those comments followed others made by other obstinate NDP members, calling for a moratorium on oil sands development. Their opposition to resource development is harmful to all regions of Canada and will hurt Quebec's Plan Nord, for instance.

While the NDP is trying to quietly advance its anti-development agenda, there remains no doubt that it wants to shut down an industry that brings in billions of dollars for the Government of Canada and pays for important social programs such as education and health care.

We will let him visit the oil sands, but we will not forget that he wants to impose a carbon tax, shut down development of the oil sands and kill thousands of jobs.

* * *

[English]

CITY OF MARKHAM

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Markham town council on its decision last night to become a city, effective Canada Day, 2012.

Over the last half century, probably no place in Canada has changed more than Markham has. From a small, agriculture-based town, Markham has emerged as Canada's high-tech centre and is the most diverse community in the country.

With a population of 300,000, it is time for Markham to become a city, not only for reasons of population, but also to attract investment and jobs.

Markham is also a very well-governed town. The town council has managed to keep property taxes virtually flat for the last four years.

Markham is also one of the greenest communities in the country.

When asked which community I represent in this Parliament, as of Canada Day, I will be very proud to say, the city of Markham.

* * *

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in an effort to save face after attacking Canadians who work in resource industries as a “disease”, the NDP leader is going to do a tour of Canada's oil sands. This politically motivated trip is something the NDP should have done before attacking large sectors of Canada's economy.

Sadly, the NDP leader's attack on the resource sector as a “disease” is not the first time he has shown Canadians his ideologically driven opposition to these jobs. In December 2007,

the NDP leader said that Canada's “very balanced economy that includes a very strong resource sector” is a “problem”.

Unlike the NDP, which opposes job creation, our government recognizes the importance of Canada's resource industries. It is clear to us and all Canadians that the only disease is the belief in the NDP that attacking hard-working Canadians is somehow acceptable. It is not on this side of the House.

* * *

● (1420)

MAILING OF HUMAN REMAINS

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were horrified to hear of the senseless and cowardly mailing of human remains to Conservative Party headquarters, and the interception of a second package at Canada Post's Ottawa sorting centre.

Our sympathies go out to the staff at the Conservative Party offices who opened the package. Our thoughts are also with Canada Post employees who had to deal with the second package containing human remains. They were all victims of an outrageous and reprehensible act. We encourage anyone with information on this crime to contact police immediately.

On behalf of New Democrats, and I think all members of the House across all party lines, we stand in solidarity with postal workers and especially the Conservative Party staff. We condemn these acts and stand united together against these crimes.

* * *

RESTORING RAIL SERVICE LEGISLATION

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, CP Rail, the company whose trains carry over \$500 million for the Canadian economy, has been on strike for almost a week. The trains have stopped, products are sitting on cars and Canadian jobs are at risk. Our government is acting to protect these jobs and the Canadian economy.

The House of Commons sat late last night to pass this critical legislation, but now the leader of the Liberal Party is threatening to delay the bill at the next stage. The other place has a long tradition of dealing with urgent legislation in one day.

The member for Wascana has once again turned his back on the western Canadian farmer, and now the Liberals will have to explain to Canadians the loss of over \$75 million a day to the Canadian economy. If they choose to delay, will the Liberals pay back this \$75 million, and if they will, will they also finally pay back the \$40 million that they stole from Canadians?

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Commissioner of the Environment offered disturbing testimony before the parliamentary committee that is studying the Conservatives' Trojan Horse bill. According to the commissioner, because of this bill, the number of environmental assessments is going to plummet.

This is huge: 99% of environmental assessments will disappear.

Why does the Prime Minister want to attack our environment and our economy?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our objective is to ensure clear environmental assessments. A thorough job will be done by a certain deadline. However, in the end, a decision must be made.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question is clear. Why is the government cutting environmental protection for Canadians?

The environment commissioner testified that environmental screenings will be reduced from as many as 6,000 per year to as few as 20 or 30. Ninety-nine per cent of the projects that are now screened will not have any screening at all and will, in fact, be rubber-stamped by the government. Some of these are major mining projects, oil sands projects and even some offshore drilling projects, all of which will be rubber-stamped by the government.

How can the Prime Minister justify these reckless attacks on our economy and our environment?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Of course, Mr. Speaker, there is no such thing. What the government is doing with these changes to environmental assessment is ensuring that there will be a single review rather than duplicative reviews.

It also ensures that the focus and attention will be obviously on the biggest projects, and as well, that decisions will be rendered within a reasonable time period. That will be up to two years.

It is still a very thorough assessment, but it is important that we not duplicate our work, and that we are able to give certainty to investors about the timeline for decisions.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will judge the Prime Minister on his destructive actions, not his false assurances.

Conservatives are also slashing the employment insurance program, which does not belong to them but to the workers who paid into it, without consulting businesses, without consulting workers, without consulting the provinces and without even the integrity to mention this even once in the last federal campaign.

The reality is these changes do not connect people with jobs. They connect people with provincial welfare programs.

When will the government acknowledge that its cynical scheme targets the very businesses, communities and workers upon which our economy relies?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is completely the opposite. Far from ending employment insurance, employment insurance will very much be there for people who cannot find jobs within their qualifications and within their region.

There are, however, as we know, growing labour shortages in this country. We want to make every effort we can to make sure that people can find jobs within their region and within their qualifications. In every case, the way these rules have been structured, they will be able to find work that would pay them more than EI.

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the employment insurance reform, the Conservatives are attacking communities that depend on seasonal industries, the film industry and the construction industry—in short all Canadians who do contract work to pay the bills.

The Conservatives are penalizing Canadians for their career choices. They are penalizing entire communities of workers because they chose atypical or seasonal occupations.

Why did the Conservatives decide to destroy Canada's economic diversity by attacking workers?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth.

The reforms that we are making to the employment insurance system are designed to help unemployed workers who have lost their jobs find another one in order to improve their well-being and that of their families. We will help them find these jobs; however, if unemployed workers cannot find jobs, employment insurance will be there to help them, as it always has been.

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is altogether different. By intervening, the Conservatives will create downward pressure on the wages of all workers. No matter what the issue, this government insists on picking winners and losers and dismantling entire sectors of the Canadian economy. The Conservatives believe that contract workers are lazy.

I have news for them: contract workers are honest people who work hard to find and honour their contracts. They pay their EI contributions in order to be eligible for benefits.

Why is the government stealing food from their tables?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, she is wrong for two reasons.

Oral Questions

First, we want to help people find work in order to improve their well-being and that of their families. The NDP does not support these initiatives.

Second, that party, the NDP, is trying to pit Canada's regions against one another. The NDP believes that improvements in one region of this great country are detrimental to another region. We find that totally unacceptable.

[*English*]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Prime Minister could tell us today what the anticipated reductions in employment insurance payments are expected as a result of the changes being proposed by the government. It is clear that this is a money-saving exercise.

I wonder if the Prime Minister could tell us exactly what kind of money will be saved in this regard.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are not actually pursuing this as a money-saving exercise. Our objective is to match people with jobs.

As I said earlier, we have labour shortages in this country, but, at the same time, we also have many people who need work and are not finding work. There is enhanced opportunity to get people back to work. This government has a strong record in that regard. We want to ensure that we have the assistance in place that will allow people to get work they are qualified for in their area and provide a better living standard for themselves and their families.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are entitled to a clear answer to the question with respect to what the government's approach is.

Is it the Government of Canada's position today that as a result of the existing law there are people collecting employment insurance who should not in fact be collecting employment insurance?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know there are jobs going begging in areas where there are people who are unemployed so we are trying to rectify that problem.

In terms of the specifics once again, which the leader of the Liberal Party asked me on employment insurance costs, I do not think he understands how the system works. Any reduction in the costs of employment insurance in any case do not accrue to the general revenue fund. They come off the premiums that are charged to Canadian workers.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past two years, the government has increased EI premium rates for employers and employees. We have yet to get a clear and honest answer from this government. I will ask the question again.

As the minister herself said, is it the government's position that there are people across the country collecting employment insurance who should not in fact be collecting employment insurance?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's position is that if jobs are available and

the unemployed have the opportunity to work and be better off, then it is in everyone's interest that they do so.

[*English*]

The objective of this government is very different from the objective of the leader of the Liberal Party. Our objective is to get people back to work. The leader of the Liberal Party, when he was premier of Ontario, bragged that he had the welfare capital of Canada. Our objective is to have the job capital of the world.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, proposed Conservative changes to the employment insurance system will disproportionately hurt Newfoundland and Labrador. Nearly 80% of my province's EI claimants would be targeted because they have been on EI more than once.

The Conservatives did not even have the courtesy of calling the premier before they targeted Newfoundland and Labrador with their misguided changes. These changes run the risk of emptying rural Newfoundland and Labrador, as if the damage to the fisheries was not enough.

Why are the Conservatives punishing seasonal businesses and the hard-working men and women who keep them going?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has it all wrong and his fearmongering, frankly, is irresponsible.

We are letting Canadians know what their responsibilities are under the Employment Insurance Act, which is to look for a job. EI is a temporary support to help people while they are looking for work. That is right in the law. The difference right now is that we will help them understand that. We will help them find jobs that exist in their local area for which they are qualified. If those jobs do not exist, then EI will be there for those individuals as it always has been.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at this time of year, many communities across northern Manitoba and northern Saskatchewan face annual forest fires and depend upon forest firefighters to keep them safe. We count on these firefighters to be ready and to keep our communities in a safe condition. However, now, when they return, they will be targeted as frequent EI users and face the cuts that the government is putting forward.

Why did the minister not consult with northern and aboriginal communities and support the people who keep our communities safe?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is our government that recognizes the contributions that emergency services personnel, including volunteer firefighters, make. We are the ones who brought in support for those volunteer firefighters.

Oral Questions

We are helping those people, if they want to work in the off-season of firefighting, to find jobs for which they are suited and find jobs in their own area so that they and their families will be better off. Part of the changes we are making will ensure that with the work they accept they and their families will be better off.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I invite the minister to come to northern Canada and visit the people who put their lives on the line to fight forest fires.

Firefighting, along with other seasonal work, like fishing, is the only industry that supports aboriginal and northern communities. In many cases workers would be forced to go on provincial welfare or to leave, making us lose critical skills like forest firefighting.

Will the government support the heroes we all need to keep us safe and withdraw its changes to EI that target seasonal workers?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are there supporting those individuals. We are supporting them all the way. If they lose their job at the end of the season, we will help them look for another job, one within their skill range and geographic area, because we do not want them uprooting their family. If they cannot find a job within those qualifications, then the EI will be there. However, if they can, we have changed the rules so that they will always be better off with finding that work.

• (1435)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, across the country, from Halifax to Rivière-du-Loup to Vancouver, tourism industry representatives are saying the same thing: they need seasonal workers in order to operate.

They are quite concerned about the Conservatives' cuts to employment insurance. Tourism injects billions of dollars into our regions each year and is often the largest source of revenue for our rural communities.

Before wreaking havoc with the employment insurance program, did the Conservatives take the time to consult industry representatives? If so, can we see the report from those consultations?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to a number of reports there is a labour shortage across Canada, in a few sectors in particular.

Employers currently have to look for workers outside Canada, even in regions with a very high unemployment rate. What we want to do is give Canadians with the necessary skills the opportunity to apply for those positions. That will be better for them, for the economy and for Canada.

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are some basic principles here that the Conservatives just do not understand.

One does not suddenly become a seasonal worker. It takes training, as well as a thorough knowledge of history and geography. Across the country, museums, parks, hotels and restaurants rely on competent seasonal workers to do business. Regional economies depend on them.

It is impossible to replace these skilled workers at a moment's notice without losing expertise that is essential to the regions. The Conservatives will be making life very difficult for them. It is irresponsible.

What do the Conservatives have to say to the hundreds of communities that rely on tourism and see the Conservatives directly attacking an industry that is unavoidably seasonal?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we support seasonal industries and sectors. However, I have to wonder why the NDP does not want to help the people who work in these sectors find other jobs for the rest of the year, jobs that would improve their well-being, that of their families and even that of their communities.

Why does the NDP not want to help those people, those Canadians, find work and be better off?

* * *

[*English*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, out of work Canadians are learning the truth about the Conservatives. They may have paid into EI their whole working careers, but if they have claimed EI more than once, the Conservatives are saying that it is their fault.

The Conservatives' attack on Atlantic Canada continues. The Conservatives are closing three DFO offices in Nova Scotia just days after they gutted the Centre for Offshore Oil, Gas and Energy Research.

Is there no Conservative over there willing to stand up for Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Centre for Offshore Oil, Gas and Energy Research is not shutting down. Important research currently being done by scientists at the centre will now be done through a new advisory group that will provide advice on priority issues and will manage a research fund. Through this new advisory group, the department will continue to provide science advice on contaminants and will provide funding to universities and other facilities to conduct research.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, even former Conservative fisheries ministers disagreed with the government's devious and scary changes to the Fisheries Act. It will be giving the green light to projects that pollute our waterways, destroy our fish habitat and devastate our coastal communities, all the while getting rid of scientists and researchers who help ensure sustainable management of these resources.

When will the Conservatives stop playing Russian roulette with the fisheries and coastal communities?

Oral Questions

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are focusing on fish and fish habitat protection rules on Canada's fisheries. I have said that many times. The changes that we are making are vast improvements over the current act. We will be identifying ecologically sensitive areas, make fisheries hatch conditions enforceable and allow higher maximum penalties for rule breakers. We will also create new and clear accessible guidelines for Canadians to follow prior to produce in or near waters.

We are making substantial changes and NDP governments, such as in Manitoba, are very supportive of the changes we want to make.

* * *

• (1440)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, fishers are not the only ones who will be left out in the cold once the Conservatives push their Trojan Horse bill through Parliament. Yesterday, we heard troubling testimony from the Commissioner of the Environment.

He said that the Conservatives plan to eliminate environmental assessments. Instead of conducting 4,000 to 6,000 assessments per year, the government will conduct only about 20 or 30. That is irresponsible.

Will the minister confirm that that is his intention?

[English]

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to correct my colleague's impression and that, as a matter of fact, of the environment commissioner. While it is true that about 4,000 to 5,000 screenings are completed each year under the current Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the vast majority of these are very small projects that pose little or no environmental risk.

Under the new act, the focus will be on projects that pose high risks to the environment and the actual number of federal panels or standard environmental assessments will actually number in the hundreds.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are only two possible explanations: either there will be only 20 economic development projects in the country per year, or the vast majority of projects will simply not be assessed.

Because of the Conservatives' changes, aquaculture and bridge projects, not to mention offshore drilling and oil sands projects, will not be assessed because they will be considered "small". The Conservatives are presenting this as a decision to streamline the process, but people are not buying it.

How many environmental assessments will be carried out under the new regime?

[English]

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would correct my hon. friend. She is wrong. The environment commissioner is wrong. In fact, if the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of the Environment has the floor.

Hon. Peter Kent: Mr. Speaker, I will tell my hon. colleague that if the NDP were ever, in the unlikely eventuality, to form government, there would not be any assessments—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. minister probably appreciates the applause, but I would ask members to hold off until he is finished his response.

The hon. Minister of the Environment has the floor.

Hon. Peter Kent: Mr. Speaker, in that highly unlikely eventuality, there would be no environmental assessments because the NDP has made it clear that it opposes all responsible resource development and all resource jobs.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only are the government's employment insurance changes an attack on the seasonal industries in the workforce that depend on those jobs, new rules around foreign workers, especially in the farm sector, would make the government the big boss.

Government officials would in effect determine whom employers may or may not hire. Farmers claim this would impact their productivity and jeopardize their harvest and their businesses.

Why would the minister take Mike Harris's failed and discredited workfare program and impose it on the entire country?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do have skills and labour shortages in many sectors across the country. This has been the situation for a very long time in agriculture.

We want to ensure that even though we require that employers check with Canadians first before they go offshore looking, we are just reinforcing that Canadians should have first crack at those jobs. It does not make sense to have 300 people registered as farm labourers on EI and then allow the employer to bring in 200 people from offshore. We want Canadians to have first crack at those jobs and that is what we are going to help them get.

Oral Questions

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's youth job market has yet to recover from the recession. Four years ago, 60% of young Canadians had jobs. Today, only about half of young Canadians have jobs. Nearly one million youth are out of school and out of work. If we do nothing, we risk losing the talent of an entire generation.

When will the government recognize that Canada has a youth jobs crisis and introduce a real plan to help young Canadians connect to real job opportunities?

•(1445)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are doing exactly that. The best way to create jobs for young people is to create jobs for the entire economy. We are very pleased that the economy has grown by over 750,000 net new jobs since the middle of the recession. We are very proud of that. That includes jobs for young people.

However, that is not enough. That is why we made a permanent expansion to Canada's summer jobs program so young people could get the experience they needed for jobs. This budget includes \$50 million to help students and young people get the jobs and the experience they need for the jobs today and tomorrow.

* * *

[Translation]

CO-OPERATIVES

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2009, in support of the International Year of Cooperatives, the Conservative government said that it intended to use the year "to promote the benefits of the co-operative model, as well as to raise awareness of the contribution of co-operatives to Canada's socio-economic development."

The motion that will be debated in the House this afternoon reflects that desire.

Does the government plan on supporting the motion?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave us a clear mandate to focus on economic growth and job creation. That is the direction we are taking with the 2012 economic action plan. No fewer than 750,000 net new jobs have been created in the private sector. Co-operatives are obviously an important part of the economy. This is an important sector that we have always supported vigorously.

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are giving cabinet new power to approve pipeline projects, even if there is evidence the project could cause harm. Now we discover that gutting environmental protections may lead to more delays and greater uncertainty.

First nations have warned that any cabinet interference in the Enbridge northern gateway review will be met with lawsuits. First

nations have also pledged to defend their constitutional rights against Conservative attacks.

Will the minister now listen to reason and stop interfering in the northern gateway review process?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will be bringing the National Energy Board in line with other federal regulatory bodies, including the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. We believe that for major projects, it can have a significant impact on the economy and on the environment and that elected officials responsible to the people, through Parliament, should have the ultimate decision, rather than appointed officials. Canadians have the right to know who is responsible for what and to be held accountable.

* * *

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Conservatives are treating first nations rights as an annoying obstacle.

Last evening in committee, the chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Shawn Atleo, criticized the Conservatives for not consulting the first nations before proposing changes to environmental legislation. He predicted that trampling on the rights of aboriginals would lead to more legal battles, more delays in development projects and more economic uncertainty for everyone.

When will the Conservatives start listening to the first nations?

[English]

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we understand the duty to consult and we take this very responsibly and very seriously. We take a whole of government approach to doing this. In fact, in budget 2012, the economic action plan, we have added additional resources to carry out that function.

* * *

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the same time they try to force through their pipeline and projects, the Conservatives are making cuts to marine safety. In spite of mounting public opposition, the Conservatives are sticking to their reckless plan to close the Kitsilano Coast Guard station.

This week the B.C. premier and the Vancouver mayor and council added their voices to those demanding Ottawa reverse this cut.

Will the minister back down from his reckless plan, which would put the lives of British Columbians at risk?

Oral Questions

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Our first priority is always, primarily and foremost, the safety of mariners. Levels of search and rescue service in Vancouver will remain the same. In fact, the Coast Guard will establish a new inshore rescue boat station for the summer season in Vancouver and strengthen partnerships with people like the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue group. Also, a new hovercraft will be in service early next year, which will improve the search and rescue response capability in the Vancouver area.

• (1450)

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives had bothered to consult anyone about this decision, they would have found how reckless it was. This cut will increase risks to coastal communities.

It is curious that none of the B.C. Conservatives are standing up for the Coast Guard. The heritage minister claims marine safety will not be compromised. He says that we could just use a hovercraft. The fisheries ministers plans to fill the gap with volunteers.

What will it take for the B.C. Conservatives to stand up to the fisheries minister and demand he back down from this reckless decision?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it shocking that the member opposite would demonize our volunteers, the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue unit. It is inexcusable to talk in those terms.

In no way would we be jeopardizing the safety of our mariners at any time. We are confident that going forward we will be providing a service. The best way to provide a high level service of search and rescue to Canadians is with a combined contribution of dedicated responders, our SAR volunteers and partners across the country.

* * *

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night the House of Commons moved to end the strike at CP Rail by passing Bill C-39. Labour stability in the rail sector is critical to the functioning of a Canadian economy, our continued economic recovery and the confidence of Canadians businesses and the Canadian public.

In my riding of Yorkton—Melville, the exports of grain and potash are essential to the economy. The work stoppage at CP Rail is costing the Canadian economy \$540 million each week it continues and will put the jobs of thousands of other Canadians at risk if it is prolonged.

Could the Minister of Labour please give the House an update on the status of Bill C-39?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Yorkton—Melville for all his work.

In an astonishing turn of events, and despite 60 years of parliamentary precedence and tradition, we have learned that the Liberals have decided they will block passage of the bill in the

Senate. Let me be clear. This is an \$80 million bill that the third party is handing to the Canadian public—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Labour has the floor.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, sadly, the truth hurts. Delaying even a day is an \$80 million bill to the Canadian public and they are preventing the Teamsters, the people that they say they march shoulder to shoulder with, from returning to work. It is a sad, sad day. It is a calculated move by the Liberals. It is irresponsible and it is arrogant.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CONTAMINATED WATER IN SHANNON

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the victims of the contamination in Shannon have been seeking justice for 10 years now. The Department of National Defence and Environment Canada knew that the water in Shannon was contaminated with TCE, but they still allowed people to be poisoned.

We are talking about people who are now suffering from cancer and other serious illnesses as a result of this. The people of Shannon deserve better.

For once, will the Minister of Veterans Affairs stand up for the people in the Quebec City region and for veterans who are victims of the contamination, or is he going to once again let the Prime Minister's Office tell him what to do?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have done more for the Quebec City area, and I invite the members for the Quebec City area to continue to work as my predecessors did. We are proud to be Conservative members from Quebec and we will continue to work for Quebec.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to give the Minister of the Environment an opportunity to clear the record.

Every time an independent, arm's-length expert raises concerns with the Conservative government's reckless agenda, such as the Auditor General, the Parliamentary Budget Officer and now the environment commissioner, those experts must be wrong and the Conservative government must be right.

The Conservatives may be content to drink their own bathwater, but to ask Canadians to do the same thing is reprehensible and wrong.

Will the Minister of the Environment clear the record and clear the good name of the environment commissioner and Canada?

Oral Questions

•(1455)

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I remarked that the environment commissioner's greenhouse gas inventory numbers were out of date. I said that he was under-informed on the federal contaminated sites program. His office has since come back and as much as admitted that fact and suggested that it would like new information to update and do a supplementary report.

With regard to the numbers he offered yesterday to the committee regarding his estimate of the number of federal assessments under the CEAA 2012, his numbers were wrong.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health, the Conservatives do not know what they are talking about.

Yesterday, a report gave troubling statistics about children's physical activity. Half of all children get only three hours of exercise per week and are sedentary for 63% of their free time.

However, when asked about this, the Minister of State for Sport said, "More and more kids are getting involved in sports." However, that is clearly not the case.

Does the Minister of State for Sport agree with the report and is he aware of the extent of the problem?

[English]

Hon. Bal Gosal (Minister of State (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, keeping our kids active and involved in sports leads to healthier, happier lifestyles. That is why our government is working hard to provide families and children with opportunities to take part in physical activity.

We have upgraded the children's fitness tax credit and continue to work with partners like Participaction and Le Grand défi and the provinces and territories to ensure young Canadians stay active and healthy.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister could not even answer if he was worried about childhood activity. Once again, he could not answer if he agreed with the report. Now he cannot even say clearly if he even read the report. The minister has fumbled his portfolio.

Childhood obesity rates are rising. It is important for Canadian families to get kids moving. The minister thinks the Conservative approach is working despite all the evidence that the problem is getting worse.

Will the government pledge to do more than exercise its talking points to get Canadian families and children active?

Hon. Bal Gosal (Minister of State (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, under our government, working with Canadian Tire Jumpstart, we have helped nearly 400,000 kids to get involved in sports if they wish to be involved. That is why our government is working hard to provide families and children with the opportunity to take part in physical activity.

We have created the children's fitness tax credit and continue to work with parties like Participaction, which was cancelled by the previous government, Le Grand défi and the provinces and territories to ensure young Canadians stay active and healthy.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in an unprecedented move, four former fisheries ministers have criticized the Prime Minister in an open letter stating:

We find it troubling that the government is proposing to amend the Fisheries Act via omnibus budget legislation in a manner that we believe will inevitably reduce and weaken the habitat protection provisions.

Is the government really so incompetent that it cannot find any way to protect farmers without gutting the Fisheries Act?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been no substantive changes to the Fisheries Act since 1977. This is 2012.

I respect the individuals who made the comments, but I believe that what we have proposed would strengthen our habitat rules. We are focusing on recreational, aboriginal and commercial fisheries. The rules that we are putting in place will actually strengthen many areas and provide a clearer answer to Canadians as to what they can do in and around waterways.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's capacity to deal with a major oil spill in Atlantic Canada or the Beaufort Sea is being decimated by the government. Conservatives are curtailing the work of a noted research centre at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography. They are phasing out research on the biological effects of oil and gas. Worse still, they have put world-class oil spill expert Ken Lee on notice that his job is in jeopardy, if one can imagine.

Why is the government being so reckless when it comes to protecting our coastal zones?

•(1500)

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, our government will continue to provide advice on the effects of contaminants. That is why we are establishing a national advisory group that will provide advice on priority issues and will manage a research fund.

Through this new advisory group, the department will continue to provide science advice on contaminants and will provide funding to universities and other facilities to do the research.

*Oral Questions***EMPLOYMENT**

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in October last year the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, with much fanfare, announced a \$1 billion contract to upgrade the Canadian army's fleet of LAV III combat vehicles. The General Dynamics Land Systems Edmonton plant was to create 110 secure, highly skilled jobs for five years.

I have been advised that only six months later, these workers are already being laid off. Can the Minister of Public Works and Government Services confirm if these promised jobs are being cut?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we work very closely with the Canadian security and defence industry, which provides 90,000 highly skilled jobs across Canada.

This is a decision made by a private sector company, but we are happy that this particular organization, General Dynamics, does have 2,200 jobs across Canada.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, these were highly skilled, well-paid manufacturing jobs for my province. The workers were promised job security.

Was the \$1 billion contract contingent upon delivering these Edmonton jobs? It raises an obvious question: how many of the jobs the government claims it has created still exist?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, this particular contract was awarded to a company that, while it is an American company, has plants here in Canada and provides thousands of jobs to Canadians across Canada.

This particular layoff is a private sector decision, but we are proud that we work closely with the security and defence industry, which employs 90,000 Canadians across the country, to develop high-skill jobs.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last evening in the House of Commons, NDP MPs, many of them from British Columbia, deliberately ran out the clock on debate rather than support the effort to send Bill C-311 to the other place.

In doing so, the NDP has forced a second hour of debate that could potentially not occur again until late October. Given that wine agri-tourism season runs from now until early October, these unreasonable delaying tactics will in turn delay our Canadian wine industry from implementing planned expansions that create jobs and support our local economy.

Does the government recognize the need for this important legislation?

The Speaker: The Hon. Minister of National Revenue.

Order.

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Okanagan—Coquihalla for

his work on the bill, and also our colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country for his tireless effort on this issue.

Bill C-311 is a positive step toward reducing unnecessary interprovincial trade barriers and toward promoting jobs and growth in the wine industry.

We are truly disappointed in the NDP members for playing silly political games and needlessly delaying passage of a bill that they claim to support. They tell the wine industry one thing, and then their actions in the House display something else. They are clearly not equipped to govern.

* * *

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Vancouver city council passed a motion demanding a reversal of the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard base, which downloads a huge financial and safety cost to the city with no consultation.

Retired Coast Guard Dave Howell, who responded to over 30,000 incidents, calls it “incompetent and borderline criminal. I get a knot in my stomach and want to throw up”.

Kitsilano base serves Canada's busiest port, with over 350 rescues a year. A new hovercraft will not meet that need.

Will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans reverse his mistake—

The Speaker: The Hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, the safety of mariners is our primary concern. We are going to strengthen our relationships with our partners on water search and rescues, partners such as the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue, a volunteer group. We are very proud to have these people. They do fine, incredible work, unlike what we heard earlier today. Our volunteers do incredible work, and we are proud to work with them and proud to support them and help them in their work with us.

* * *

● (1505)

[Translation]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the RADARSAT Constellation program is at risk. The recent Conservative budget does not provide a single penny to build the satellites, despite years of design and development efforts. The satellites are designed to assist with marine surveillance and to respond to catastrophes and climate change, but the Conservatives are giving up and abandoning the project, which will hurt the economy.

When will the Minister of Industry restore funding for RADARSAT? Will he explain himself before the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology?

Points of Order

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): As I have said on many occasions in this House, we know that the 2010 budget, which the NDP voted against, allocated \$497 million to the RADARSAT Constellation mission, and the 2009 budget, which the NDP also voted against, allocated \$110 million for space robotics.

I will say it again: we are committed to this project and we will endeavour to deliver it in a cost-effective way.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, added to a list that includes Kofi Annan and Angelina Jolie is one Robert Mugabe. Zimbabwe's despotic leader this week was named as a UN envoy. His title? International tourism ambassador for the UN World Tourism Organization.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs please inform the House how Canada intends to respond to the fact that someone prevented from travelling to Europe because he has committed egregious human rights abuses is being recognized in this way by the UN?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it truly is outrageous that someone with such a bad track record on human rights could be appointed to something by a United Nations body. It shows how out of touch this body is with reality. This type of appointment undermines the very United Nations organization.

In the budget we said we would be reviewing our membership in international organizations. Canada has signalled its intention to withdraw from the UN World Tourism Organization, a decision that will take place later this month.

* * *

[Translation]

BORDER CROSSING

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, an austerity budget is not going to help develop the economy of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

What is needed is some kind of developmental project, such as the introduction of a customs service at the Bagotville airport. That will help our tourism industry, in addition to opening up other business opportunities.

Everyone in the region agrees on the project. The mayor supports it, Quebec's transportation department supports it, and even the Conservatives, during the election campaign, supported the project.

Is the government going to work with us and with local officials in order to introduce a customs service at the Bagotville airport very soon?

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are always looking at ways to improve service for Canadians. That is what our beyond the borders initiative is doing.

The Prime Minister signed the agreement with the president in order to find ways to keep more smaller airports and border crossings open.

I hope that the NDP join us in that initiative so that we can work to protect smaller areas, to provide the services that local constituents require.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, nearly 300 people have just lost their jobs with the closing of the Levinoff-Colbex slaughterhouse in Saint-Cyrille-de-Wendover.

The federal government has never wanted to admit that it is harming slaughterhouses by imposing slaughtering standards that are more stringent and more costly than those in place south of the border. The Conservatives' inaction is now having consequences that are devastating for these hundreds of employees. Beef producers and the Quebec government are currently working on setting up a co-op.

Will the Minister of Agriculture commit to meeting with the Fédération des producteurs de bovins du Québec in order to explore all possible avenues to save the slaughterhouse and the jobs it provides?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is well known that, historically, our government has always provided solid support to the Levinoff-Colbex slaughterhouse. Its closing is of course a business decision, and our thoughts are with the employees and the families affected.

However, I would like to point out that we provided the company with \$4.6 million in funding to help it cope with the negative impact of the difference between its costs and U.S. costs. Our door is always open to working with producers to examine issues of competitiveness.

At the time, large amounts of money had been earmarked in the budgets, which could have gone to help the slaughterhouse, but which the Bloc voted against, I remember.

[English]

The Speaker: That concludes question period for today. The Chair has notices of two points of order. I will take them in the order in which I was made aware of them.

The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

* * *

● (1510)

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to inform you of my resignation as the member for Calgary Centre.

Serving in this House on two different occasions in two different centuries has been the greatest honour of my life.

Points of Order

From 1988 to 1993, I was privileged to serve as the member of Parliament for Calgary Southeast in the government of prime minister Brian Mulroney, whose achievements included the free trade agreement and the acid rain accord, two landmark agreements between Canada and the United States.

Since 2004, I have been equally privileged to serve as the member for Calgary Centre and since 2006, in the government of Canada's 22nd Prime Minister, the right hon. member for Calgary Southwest.

To both prime ministers, I thank them for the honour of serving in their caucus. Each has remarkable listening skills when it comes to leading a united caucus, the most important leadership attribute in our parliamentary system.

This Prime Minister has reunited our party and brought it from political wilderness to government, where he leads our country with great distinction. As a Calgarian, I think all Calgarians take great pride that our country is led by one of our own. I am proud to have served in his government and am grateful for his friendship and support. I am equally proud of Lauren Harper, a wonderful chatelaine of 24 Sussex and ambassador for Canada.

I first sat in the members' gallery, and some members will recall me saying not long ago, 40 years ago, as executive assistant to the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker, Canada's 13th prime minister. He was no longer leader of the Progressive Conservative Party at that time, but he was still master of this House, the greatest parliamentarian of his time. It was a privilege to have known him and to have worked with him on his memoirs, *One Canada*. There was never a more partisan figure in this House than Mr. Diefenbaker, but he was, above all, a man of this House.

If I could share one thought with colleagues, it would be this. While we advocate for different ideas of Canada, we are all Canadians and we all love our country. I think we would all do well to remember that and leave the partisan furies at the water's edge.

There are many people I would like to thank, many people to be thanked, beginning with the voters of my two ridings who sent me here in five elections.

I would like to thank the volunteers and supporters in my Calgary association, and my dedicated staff who have served me so well over the years.

In particular, I want to thank Lynda MacKay, my executive assistant, who is now the longest serving staffer on Parliament Hill. Just last week she received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for her decades of unbroken service.

I am leaving to take up a new opportunity as principal secretary to the Premier of Alberta, Alison Redford. This is an exciting challenge at a moment when Alberta's new premier is claiming Alberta's leadership role in the Canadian federation in a way that only Peter Lougheed, among her predecessors, has done.

To my friends here, I say goodbye for now. I hope to see all of you at the 100th anniversary of the Calgary Stampede this July. It has been an honour to be in your company.

• (1515)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I await my call from the Premier of Alberta, but it is a long time in coming.

As my friend receives salutations and congratulations from many of our colleagues around the House, he can look at the blues later for my comments. I consider him a friend, and do so much because of the way he just responded and told us about his life and experience here.

I thank him for his many invitations to the Calgary Stampede. We now all have one for the centennial, which is great.

I also must commend him. This life and work are not often kind to us, and for somebody who can reflect back to days with former prime minister John Diefenbaker, I must say the time has been remarkably good to my friend from Calgary Centre. He is looking great. We wish him the very best from the New Democratic Party of Canada and from all the citizens we represent.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these events are somewhat like Tom Sawyer's funeral, where he had the benefit of attending so he could hear the eulogies. The hon. member for Calgary Centre is in exactly that position.

I simply say as somebody who I suspect has been hanging around the House of Commons perhaps even a little longer than he has, what a great privilege it has been to serve with him in this House.

His words to us were well expressed and are a worthy reminder of how important a very simple word like "civility" really is. Civility does not just apply to whether or not we are polite with one another. Civility also applies to how the House itself is run. All of us who have had a chance to work with the member for Calgary Centre, whether on committee where he has served as a very effective and fair-minded chair, whether in the House itself where his interventions have always been singularly well-spoken, positive and thoughtful, or in private conversations, it can be said that he is someone who is constantly reaching out to all sides of the House not only to establish political relationships but also to establish personal relationships.

[*Translation*]

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada, I offer our best wishes to our friend, the member for Calgary Centre, as he starts his new position. I do not think there is anyone more qualified than him for this job, not only for the Province of Alberta and its premier, but also for all of Canada.

[*English*]

I know the hon. member served a similar role at the time of the premiership of Peter Lougheed. I can think of no one in the country who is more qualified to serve the Premier of Alberta who, I must say, contrary to what has been said by the House leader of the official opposition, has certainly always returned my phone calls without any difficulty. Maybe he has the wrong number.

I cannot think of anybody more qualified, not only to serve her and the people of Alberta, but also to serve the people of Canada. We wish him well.

•(1520)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the other parliamentarians in paying tribute to my colleague, since I had the honour and pleasure of sitting with him from 1988 to 1993.

I was already in Parliament when he arrived in 1988. I sat with him and we were in the same party at the time—the Progressive Conservative Party. I think that, like him, I belonged to the progressive side. I very much admired his vast knowledge of politics and his diplomacy.

I would particularly like to thank the member for rising during the famous debate on the Meech Lake accord and showing his love for his country, Canada, but he always wanted to accommodate Quebec by being a great defender of the Meech Lake accords. I thank him for that. It demonstrated his generous spirit and his vision for the future with a very important place for Quebec. Unfortunately things did not turn out that way, but his efforts were noticed. I would like to thank him and wish him well in his new career.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I was very emotional as my dear friend, the member for Calgary Centre, stood to announce his resignation. As some may know, I worked as senior policy adviser to the federal minister of the environment in the Mulroney government, and one of the luckiest breaks I ever got was when the hon. member for Calgary Centre, who worked in the prime minister's office, took the time to help advance an issue and make sure that the great environmental goals of that government were achieved.

It has been one of the greatest pleasures for me to serve in Parliament with an old and dear friend. However, he is not that old. I want to clear something up. He first worked with John Diefenbaker when he was only four or five years old. I do not know what use he possibly was to the prime minister in that era, but it speaks well of Progressive Conservative policies for child labour that we still have the hon. member for Calgary Centre among us. We will miss him very much.

I wish him the best of luck in his position with the Alberta government.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising out of question period today.

The member for Okanagan—Coquihalla raised a point about a bill that he has been moving through the House. We have made offers to the Conservative Party to switch his bill to allow it to pass before the summer. I am unclear as to which part of yes the Conservatives cannot take for an answer. We have offered everything we can do to move the bill through expeditiously. That is what would happen if the hon. member would agree. I do not understand why the government is continuing to disrupt the hopes and dreams of

Routine Proceedings

winemakers right across this country and those who enjoy it. No one shall say that New Democrats do not like wine as much as the next party.

[*Translation*]

USE OF AN UNPARLIAMENTARY EXPRESSION

Mr. Claude Patry (Jonquière—Alma, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening in the House, during my speech on Bill C-39, I used an English word that anglophones define a certain way. I will not repeat it in the House. As a francophone, to me that word means “to be taken for a ride” or “to be had”.

Since we are in the House of Commons and some of my colleagues were offended, I would like to withdraw the word and apologize to all of my fellow MPs.

[*English*]

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for addressing that situation.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1525)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2011 annual report on the RCMP's use of the law enforcement justification provisions, as per sections 25.1 to 25.4 of the Criminal Code.

* * *

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 response to six petitions.

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the National Governors Association winter meeting held in Washington, D.C., February 24 to 27, 2012.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in relation to its study on the main estimates, 2012-13.

Routine Proceedings

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 25th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in relation to its study of the main estimates, 2012-13, vote 5 under Parliament and vote 15 under Privy Council.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts in relation to its study of the main estimates, 2012-13, vote 20 under Finance.

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-424, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (contestation of election and punishment).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce what I think is important legislation to strengthen our electoral system to deter those who may be considering committing electoral fraud.

We are seeking to do two things with this legislation. The first is to add the Chief Electoral Officer as somebody under the Canada Elections Act who has the authority to go before a competent court and contest the result in a particular riding. The current legislation only allows an elector or a candidate in that riding. As we know, it can be cost prohibitive for many people in the case of a widespread, large scale fraud that may have been perpetrated. In our view, with new technologies, it is appropriate for the Chief Electoral Officer to have the ability to appear before the court to contest a particular result.

The second element of this bill would be to increase the penalties. We are not suggesting a mandatory minimum in any way. We are seeking to increase the fines that a court of competent jurisdiction could impose on somebody convicted of an offence under the act. The current fines for summary conviction offences are \$2,000. We are suggesting that the House increase that to \$20,000. For an indictable offence, the \$5,000 should properly be \$50,000.

We hope this legislation will attract broad support in the House.
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-425, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (honouring the Canadian Armed Forces).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will begin by thanking my colleague for Medicine Hat for seconding my bill.

I rise today to introduce my private member's bill, Bill C-425, an Act to amend the Citizenship Act (honouring the Canadian Armed Forces). This bill is much more than another pathway to integration. It also signifies the deep respect the people of Calgary Northeast

hold for Canadian citizenship and for the brave men and women of our Canadian armed forces.

Once passed, the Citizenship Act will require the minister to reduce, on application, the requirement of residence to become Canadian citizen by one year for a permanent resident of Canada who is a member of the Canadian Forces, who has signed a minimum three-year contract and who has completed the basic training.

It would also amend section 9 of the act to provide that individuals are deemed to have made applications for renunciation of their Canadian citizenship or are deemed to have withdrawn their application for Canadian citizenship if they engage in an act of war against the Canadian armed forces.

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

* * *

● (1530)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I anticipate you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, during the supply period ending on June 23, any deferred recorded division in respect of Private Members' Business deferred to a Wednesday, which is appointed for the consideration of business pursuant to Standing Order 81(18), shall be deemed to have been deferred to the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the same day.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the 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)

* * *

GOVERNMENT OF IRAN

Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations and I believe you would find unanimous support for the following motion.

I move, seconded by the members for Beaches—East York and Mount Royal:

That this House urgently appeals to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to grant clemency to Hamid Ghassemi-Shall on compassionate and humanitarian grounds, calls for his release and return to his family and spouse in Canada, and urges Iran to reverse its current course and to adhere to its international human rights obligations.

The Speaker: Does the hon. minister have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the 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?

Routine Proceedings

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

[*Translation*]

KATIMAVIK

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am eager to present this petition because it is yet another petition in support of Katimavik.

Many young people across Canada are very disappointed in the government's decision to stop funding this program, which was good for youth and for communities across Canada.

The petitioners are asking the government to keep funding Katimavik and to send the 600 young people who were supposed to participate in the program this summer. I hope that the government will respond favourably to the petitioners.

[*English*]

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have petitions to present on three different subjects. First, the Catholic Women's League for Notre Dame Parish in North Battleford calls on the House of Commons to consider a solution to the problem in regard to the exploitation of children through the Internet. They are asking Parliament to put pressure on the CRTC to establish regulations to protect the most vulnerable of our society.

ABORTION

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions from Burstall, Saskatchewan and the North Battleford area that call on the House of Commons to speedily enact legislation that restricts abortion to the greatest extent possible.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions, with over 250 signatures on one petition, from Alberta and Saskatchewan communities, from the Kindersley area, from Grayson, Lloydminster, Lashburn, other communities and my riding.

The petitioners call upon the House to confirm that every human being is recognized by Canadian law as human by amending section 223 of our Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect 21st century medical evidence.

PENSIONS

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today signed by thousands of people from Moose Jaw and various places in the western part of our country.

The petitioners are calling on the Prime Minister to maintain the current retirement age at 65 when it comes to the old age security benefits.

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by people who live in my riding of Wellington—Halton Hills.

● (1535)

[*English*]

The petition has been signed by some 50 of my constituents living in the Hillsburgh and Erin areas. It calls on the government to do three things: to commit to contribute 0.7% of GDP to overseas development; to re-prioritize the way in which CIDA funds these Canadian NGOs; and to restore the funding for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to present a petition from quite a number of constituents in the western Northwest Territories in regard to Development and Peace, formerly known as the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, which is an important Canadian development organization. It works with partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America and in the Middle East.

The work of Development and Peace is supported by Canadians across the country. The Canadian International Development Agency has been an important funding source for Development and Peace, giving \$44.6 million from 2006 to 2011. CIDA recently announced significant cuts to this funding and it will provide only \$14.5 million over the next five years.

The petitioners continue to support the work of Development and Peace and object to the significant cut in funding by CIDA. They are asking the Government of Canada to reconsider augmenting its contribution levels to Development and Peace to 2006 levels or more.

PENSIONS

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of petitioners from the Seal Cove-Fortune Bay area of my riding of Random—Burin—St. George's who call on the government to reconsider the terrible decision to raise the age of OAS eligibility from 65 to 67. They are saying that even though it will not impact seniors today, it will impact those who are 54 years or younger. They say that we all have a responsibility to ensure that we realize the impact that this will have on everyone. Those today who are seniors realize that it will be their children and grandchildren who will be impacted. Therefore, to suggest that this will not have an impact on seniors today is erroneous. It will have an impact on their immediate families.

The petitioners are asking the government to reconsider this terrible decision.

Routine Proceedings

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions. The first petition is from residents in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. It is a wide-ranging group of petitioners, but they are bound together, as we all are in Canada, by our dependence and reliance on our national public broadcaster. The CBC has brought us together for many years. It lets us share our stories.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to provide stable, secure and predictable funding for the CBC.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful, as a British Columbia member of Parliament, to be sent petitions from people in the Montreal area and Winnipeg who are calling on the government to cease and desist from acting as promoters for oil and gas expansion through British Columbia, to Kitimat, to supertankers on our coastline.

The petitioners call on the government to allow a full, fair and not rushed environmental assessment process before any pipelines or tankers are put on the B.C. coastline.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, I would like to present a petition.

The petitioners call on the House to confirm that every human being is recognized under Canadian law as a human by amending sections 22 and 23 of the Criminal Code in such a way that recognizes medical evidence of the same.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions on behalf of constituents in my riding, as well as the greater Toronto area.

Based on Canada's reputation around the world for the protection of strong humanitarian rights and human rights laws around the world and Canada's international championship of human rights and justice, the petitioners call upon the Canadian government to urge the United Nations to immediately establish an independent, international and impartial mechanism to ensure true accountability and justice in Sri Lanka following the human rights violations that were identified by the United Nations panel of experts.

[*Translation*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition on behalf of a group of lobster fishers who work in this resource sector on the Atlantic coast.

• (1540)

[*English*]

I had the privilege of being at a large community meeting in the great community of Stratford, Prince Edward Island where hundreds of inshore fishermen joined us to express a real concern with the government's proposal to remove the fleet separation and the owner-operator principle as a cornerstone of the management of inshore and

midshore fisheries. Thirty thousand jobs in Atlantic Canada depend to a great extent on these policies.

These inshore fishermen, including those in my riding, are concerned that the government is heading in a direction that will be very harmful, and they are asking the government to reconsider.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to present a petition to the House from quite a large number of people in Victoria, British Columbia.

The petitioners point out that Canada is the only nation in the western world, in the company of China and North Korea, in having no laws whatsoever protecting children before birth. They point out that Canada's Supreme Court has said that it is Parliament's responsibility to enact legislation protecting children before birth.

The petitioners therefore call upon the House of Commons to do so.

My simple request is that we look at the law which falsely misrepresents children before birth as not human beings. I hope that all parliamentarians will agree that we should study the scientific evidence on that.

ABORTION

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today, each of which may sound a bit familiar given the petitions that have already been presented today.

The first one is on behalf of residents of the greater Ottawa area, including Gloucester, Nepean and Orléans.

The petitioners point out that Canada is the only nation in the western world, in the company of China and North Korea, without any laws restricting abortion. They call upon the House of Commons to speedily enact legislation that would restrict abortion to the greatest extent possible.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from some residents of Prince Edward Island who are concerned about anticipated changes in the owner-operator and fleet separation policy affecting the midshore fishery in Prince Edward Island and on the east coast.

The petitioners rightly point out that 30,000 jobs are at stake, that there has been inadequate consultation in respect of this and that the prospect of a corporate takeover of the fishery would be devastating to the east coast economy.

The petitioners therefore call upon the Prime Minister to maintain and strengthen the fleet separation and owner-operator policies.

[Translation]

PENSIONS

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by people from Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord. The petitioners are worried about proposed changes to old age security.

The petitioners wish to point out, first, that the proposed changes will affect the poorest people most, and second, that experts agree that our old age security program is sustainable.

Considering those two facts, the petitioners are calling on the government to refrain from making any changes to old age security. Furthermore, they are calling on the government to improve the guaranteed income supplement, since the current amount is not enough to lift seniors out of poverty and is a disgrace to Canada today.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition signed by dozens of people from across Canada regarding justice and human rights.

The petition calls on the government to use its influence and good reputation around the world to put pressure on the countries that do not necessarily respect human rights, particularly Sri Lanka.

[English]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I proudly bring this petition to the House, in regard to the funding requirements and bolstering of CBC Radio-Canada, our public broadcaster in French and English. This public broadcaster facilitates the great national dialogue that we have had for well over 50 years. The petition talks about the importance of CBC Radio-Canada in both languages.

The petitioners want the Government of Canada to maintain stable, predictable and long-term core funding for the public broadcaster, and that includes its effect on the regions as well as the effect that it has on the national dialogue from coast to coast.

The petitioners primarily come from Grand Falls—Windsor and the city of Calgary.

● (1545)

AIR CANADA

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition regarding Aveos and the thousands of jobs that have been lost in three provinces, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. Employees, their families and others are concerned about the future of these jobs.

The petitioners are asking the government to hold Air Canada accountable. In essence, they call upon the House of Commons to take the action necessary in order to hold Air Canada accountable to the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

Business of Supply

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—COOPERATIVES

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.) moved:

That, a special committee be appointed to consider the status of cooperatives in Canada and to make recommendations by: (a) identifying the strategic role of cooperatives in our economy; (b) outlining a series of economic, fiscal and monetary policies for strengthening Canadian cooperatives as well as for protecting the jobs they create; (c) exploring the issue of capitalization of cooperatives, its causes, effects and potential solutions; (d) exploring whether the Canada Cooperatives Act of 1998 requires updating; (e) identifying what tools the government can use to provide greater support and a greater role to Canadian cooperatives; and that the committee consist of twelve members which shall include seven members from the government party, four members from the Official Opposition and one member from the Liberal Party, provided that the Chair is from the government party; that in addition to the Chair, there be one Vice-Chair from each of the opposition parties; that the committee have all of the powers of a Standing Committee as provided in the Standing Orders, as well as the power to travel, accompanied by the necessary staff, inside and outside of Canada, subject to the usual authorization from the House; that the members to serve on the said committee be appointed by the Whip of each party depositing with the Clerk of the House a list of his or her party's members of the committee no later than June 8, 2012; that the quorum of the special committee be seven members for any proceedings, provided that at least a member of the opposition and of the government party be present; that membership substitutions be permitted to be made from time to time, if required, in the manner provided for in Standing Order 114(2); and that the Committee report its recommendations to this House no later than November 30, 2012.

He said: Mr. Speaker, to begin the debate I would like to quote UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in English and in French. In French, to mark International Year of Cooperatives, he said:

Les coopératives rappellent à la communauté internationale qu'il est possible d'allier la vitalité économique à la responsabilité sociale.

In English he said:

● (1550)

[English]

Cooperatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility

Business of Supply

[Translation]

That is the message of this International Year of Cooperatives.

[English]

Given the declaration of the United Nations of 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives, I have been appointed as Liberal advocate for co-operatives by the Liberal leader, the member for Toronto Centre, earlier this month. I thank him for that.

The newly created role of advocate for co-operatives is based on openness, collaboration and awareness. It avoids partisanship to the greatest extent possible. It is meant to be a progressive, positive and evidence-based role. I fully intend to promote Canadian co-operatives and their values as well as assist them to the best of my abilities.

[Translation]

Since my appointment a little earlier this month, I have had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the two major national co-operative associations, the Canadian Co-operative Association and the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité. I also toured some co-operatives, including an agricultural co-operative, the Coop AgriEst in Saint-Isidore, not far from here, which was established by proud eastern Ontario farmers. This co-operative is doing very well and has increased its sales from \$10 million to \$40 million in 10 years.

I also had the pleasure of attending the grand opening of the new multi-service building of the Coopérative de solidarité multiservices Montauban, in Notre-Dame-de-Montauban, a small town with a population of less than 1,000 located north of Shawinigan. I was there with my Liberal colleague, the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain. I hope she will have time, a little later this afternoon, to talk more about this town's initiative.

Everything I have learned since my appointment from my meetings, visits, reading and personal experience has been confirmed by survey results published this week by iPolitics.

[English]

I quote from the text written by David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data. It is as follows:

In mid-May, Abacus Data was retained by the Canadian Co-operative Association to conduct a national public opinion survey to understand what Canadians know and how they feel about co-operatives. The results of the survey found a strong appetite among Canadians for the co-operative model and most Canadians, especially in Western Canada and Quebec, are already members of one or more.

Here are some of the key findings of the survey: Eight in ten Canadians (83%) said they would prefer to shop at a locally-owned business that shares its profit among member-owners and invests in the local community over a privately owned company that is part of a larger chain and well known throughout Canada. The respondents were told to assume price, service, quality, and convenience were all equal.

Over eight in ten Canadians (85%) had heard of a co-operative before, with awareness highest in Atlantic Canada, Quebec, and the Prairie provinces.

A large majority of Canadians said they were either very or somewhat familiar with co-operatives, including credit unions. Ontarians and Quebecers were the least familiar with them.

Only 5% of Canadians were aware that 2012 is the International Year of Co-operatives.

The survey also asked respondents to complete an exercise in which they were shown a series of attributes that could apply to a business and asked whether the

attribute best applied to a co-operative or another business. The survey found that Canadians clearly distinguish between co-operatives and other types of business.

Over eight in ten Canadians believed that co-operatives were better than other businesses in supporting their community's values, having a democratic structure, supporting their local economy, and selling locally produced products. They were also perceived to be better in how they treat their employees and customers, and in their social and environmental practices.

[Translation]

As the Liberal advocate for Cooperatives, I believe that it is important to reach out, to meet with representatives of organizations, and to get out into the community to have a better understanding of the reality of Canada's co-operatives.

The motion has already been read and therefore I will not read it again. I believe it is quite straightforward.

● (1555)

[English]

I would like, however, to highlight that a great advantage of this motion is that it will give Parliament and Canadians and co-operatives across the country the ability to really participate in the International Year of Cooperatives. It will help focus the efforts that would be welcomed, perhaps needed, by the Government of Canada to eventually foster a greater milieu favourable to the co-operative sector.

[Translation]

As members know, co-operatives have long played an important role in the development of the Canadian economy. We need only think of agriculture and the first agricultural co-operatives established more than a century ago.

[English]

In a 2009 report from the CCA and the CCCN, two large national co-operative organizations, we learn that agricultural co-operatives in Canada have a long and fruitful history as drivers of rural economies and mainstays of many communities across the country.

I am sure my colleague from Malpeque will have more to say on that subject.

[Translation]

The oldest co-op in Ottawa is Alterna. Founded in 1908 as the Civil Service Savings and Loan Society, it was originally a credit union for public servants. Then, a few years later, the Caisse populaire Desjardins Rideau was created, which just celebrated its 100th anniversary.

In a way, the Desjardins Group, which today has over five million members, mainly in Quebec but also in other parts of the country, started here in this House. When the movement's founder, Alphonse Desjardins, was a clerk in this House, he was working to develop a legal framework that would lead to the creation of co-operatives, particularly financial ones, across the country.

He and his wife Dorimène then moved to Lévis where they started the Desjardins Group, which is now celebrating its 110th anniversary. This is the fifth largest financial institution in the country, which shows the significance of the co-operative movement in Canada.

Business of Supply

In recent history, we can talk about housing co-operatives, which are much more than a simple place to live. A housing co-operative is a legal association based on co-operative principles that is formed to provide its members with permanent housing. In Canada, approximately a quarter of a million people live in housing co-operatives, which play a very important role in our economy and our communities.

Here are a few facts to justify setting up a special committee, as requested in the motion, to mark the International Year of Cooperatives.

Today, more than 18 million Canadians are members of co-operatives. This is a very impressive statistic. The website for the International Year of Cooperatives in Canada states that there are approximately 9,000 co-operatives in Canada, including more than 2,200 housing co-operatives, as I mentioned earlier, which are home to more than 250,000 people; there are more than 1,300 agricultural co-ops; more than 650 retail co-operatives; more than 900 credit unions and caisses populaires with close to 11 million members throughout the country; about 450 co-ops offering childcare or early childhood education—these co-ops, by the way, are Quebec's second-largest private employer; more than 600 worker co-ops—owned by the employees—with a total membership of over 13,000; and more than 100 healthcare co-operatives.

Today, co-operatives including credit unions control assets evaluated at more than \$250 billion and employ more than 150,000 people. It is well known that the co-operative concept makes it possible to set up the kind of projects that lack the critical mass needed to trigger private sector investment. For instance, at least 2,000 communities are served by at least one credit union. More than 1,100—more than half of those 2,000 communities—have only one financial institution.

This means that 1,100 communities in Canada rely on the co-operative movement for their financial institution.

Here is another important fact: the survival rate of co-ops is higher than that of private sector businesses. In addition, the rate of job creation is extraordinary, as is the solidity of cooperatives during financial crises.

I would like to draw attention to some comments by Jean-François Lisée in an article published in *L'actualité* dated March 1, 2012. Mr. Lisée underlined the fact that co-ops are more resilient than private sector companies. In fact, among co-operatives, after five years of operation, the resiliency rate is said to be 77% higher than in the private sector, and after 10 years of operation, more than 54% of co-operatives are more resilient than private sector businesses.

The other advantage, of course, is that co-operatives do not relocate. We will never see a co-operative moving its jobs abroad in order to increase its profits, so this means greater solidarity and greater stability in these strong communities that invest in their own future.

There have been examples elsewhere in the world. Mr. Lisée gave the example of Argentina, where, when a business is in danger of going bankrupt or being shut down, the employees and management would be able to make the first offer to buy it and turn it into a co-

operative. This interesting initiative was passed in Argentina last June.

Similarly, in France, when there is a public tendering process, a co-operative will win the contract. Those are two examples of countries that realized that having co-operatives and encouraging co-operative development in their country was beneficial.

Unfortunately, it is well known that co-operatives sometimes struggle to get the capital they need to get started and expand. A special committee could examine the cases and the potential solutions. Would it not also be helpful to treat financial investors in co-ops the same way as investors in private companies?

Lastly, as the motion states, the Canada Cooperatives Act was passed in 1998. It may be time to review it.

I believe that the government wants to propose an amendment. We will see about that shortly. However, I think that creating a special committee that would work until November—the motion requires the committee to report in November—would perhaps be the best way to show that Parliament is serious about the co-operative movement. Members must not forget that this movement exists in a number of sectors and not only in industry. It exists in the financial, health, child care and housing sectors. It is important for one committee to focus solely on this issue without having to deal with anything else. A standing House committee could end up examining a bill or House resolution or could end up having to take care of a crisis, and it would have to set aside its examination of this important motion during the International Year of Cooperatives.

That is why I think that appointing a special committee whose mandate would expire at the end of November would be the best way for Parliament and the government to show how serious they are. They should support co-operatives and ensure that, during the International Year of Cooperatives, they can take a closer look to see where it would be beneficial to add new programs, change the conditions of other programs or budget votes so that the co-operative world can benefit from them. We would all benefit from that.

That is what I wanted to say about the motion before us. I hope that the hon. members of the House will look favourably on this resolution, which is not partisan in the least. I have tried to avoid partisanship because I think there are people from all parts of the political spectrum in the co-operative movement. Political allegiances must not get in the way of considering this type of issue.

● (1600)

As parliamentarians, we have to appreciate the initiatives of our communities, appreciate the values they convey and strengthen them.

I hope that, over the course of this afternoon's debate, we will learn that the government has decided to support and vote in favour of this resolution.

Business of Supply

•(1605)

[*English*]

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier has done a really good job of explaining why co-operatives are a good idea, why they have been good for Canada and Canadians and why we should foster and grow them. I also want to compliment the Liberals on putting forth this very important motion. I hope it will be voted for unanimously tonight. I know the member of the independent democrats will certainly vote for it.

The hon. member dealt with co-operatives in a very broad way. I am particularly interested in credit unions and caisses populaires. One out of three Canadians today uses them for transactions. They are cost effective, affordable and the members are the customers. There are lots of good reasons for it.

Does he have any ideas on how we can immediately focus on helping our banking institutions that belong to the people?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I would not want to second guess the work of the committee, but there are areas that would have to be explored by the committee. For instance, I believe two budgets ago Parliament approved the notion of creating co-operative banks. However, the regulations to enable that have yet to be presented, to my understanding. That would certainly be one area.

I totally agree with my colleague that the importance of caisses populaires and credit unions in communities is very significant. I am a member and all my banking is done through a caisse populaire. In school we were encouraged to join a caisse populaire and open our first account. That would be very much in tune with the government's efforts to increase fiscal literacy. This whole issue is something the committee may want to look at as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech by my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier. I congratulate him on his research into co-operatives and on his comments.

It is a business model that I also like a great deal and which is probably a little underused in Canada, hence the importance of this motion to study the co-operative model.

Like most Canadians, I am a little more aware of the model used in the banking and financial sector. We also know that this business model is frequently used in the agricultural sector and for housing co-operatives.

Could my colleague tell us a little more about the benefits that other sectors of economic activity might derive from using the co-operative business model? Apart from the sectors I mentioned, I know less about other industrial sectors that use the co-operative model, and I would like to hear from my colleague about this.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I could give a whole host of other examples. With regard to housing, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada is certainly facing a problem, because the programs currently managed by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation will lapse in 2020. Action must therefore be taken in

this regard. The federation is worried. I think it will be reassured that Parliament is paying attention to the situation.

It is the same for day care. In fact, child care and early childhood education centres make up Quebec's second-largest employer. Co-operatives are the major player in this area.

There is a wide range of co-operatives. There are laundry co-ops, funeral co-ops, health co-ops and agricultural co-ops. Agricultural co-operatives are a good example. If they did not exist, some rural communities would disappear, and this is why it is so important for hundreds, if not thousands, of communities in Canada to have co-operatives that know they are supported by government policies.

•(1610)

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate it if my colleague would explain a little more about the human side of co-operatives.

What impact do these co-operatives have on people in small towns, for example, regarding their current attitude toward going to big box stores and other places that are, to some extent, absolutely dehumanized?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have been asked this question, because I have not spoken enough about the human aspect of co-operatives.

The co-operatives belong to their members. They are responsible for the way in which they deal with their clients and their employees. Most of the time, they are neighbours and people who know each other well. So of course, these people are more civil than when they go to a department store belonging to people they do not know and whose only objective is to make the greatest profit they can. Co-operatives have the well-being of their communities and best interests of their members at heart. Frequently, most of the people in the town will belong to the co-operative.

It was a wonderful idea that Alphonse Desjardins had for the financial area, and others built on his idea in the areas of agriculture, retailing, funerals and so on. The only limit to what can be done with co-operatives is the imagination. Co-operatives are built on warm, sincere, human principles that are, I think, respected by all the members in this House.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his most eloquent speech on what is indeed a very exciting issue. When I was a lot younger, I had the opportunity of being part of a housing co-op. I really got a sense of what it means to pool resources and talents, since we are talking about the human aspect.

The United Nations decreed 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives. In my colleague's opinion, have the Conservatives decided to make cutbacks specifically this year simply because they were lazy, or was it a deliberate act of defiance?

Business of Supply

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I would not have gone down that path had it not been for the response that I got on May 18 from the minister responsible for co-operatives. When I asked him what had been done since January 12, when the International Year of Cooperatives was launched, to celebrate the role and support for co-operatives in Canada, he replied that all 9,000 co-operatives were doing very well, that they had contributed 150,000 jobs, and a couple of hundred billion dollars in investment, and therefore did not need help.

I was surprised to hear that from the government spokesman, so much so that I decided to pursue the issue, without really going on the attack. These co-operatives mean a great deal to 18 million Canadians. I cannot accept the fact that the Conservatives went to the United Nations in 2009 and said that they would support the International Year of Cooperatives and that they would do what needed to be done in Canada, but when a question was asked in May, they responded by saying that the co-operatives do not need the government's help.

If we take our job as parliamentarians seriously, we must respect our commitment to the co-operatives and to the International Year of Cooperatives, and use this year to do what must be done.

[English]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the member is trying to get to a consultation through this motion. He mentioned the question he raised with the minister and that the minister basically said that they were on their own.

My question for the member is this: what will the impact of the budget cuts be on co-operatives? The rural co-operative development program has been cut from \$20 million to \$5.2 million, and the Rural Secretariat has been cut in staffing from 92 to 15. Those are serious cuts. Does the member foresee see a negative impact on the development of future co-operatives and on the maintenance of some that need community assistance now?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I thought it regrettable that a program that was created in 2003 and renewed in 2008 has ended in March of this year. That was the one to help co-operatives in terms of capital and to help them get up and running. That is gone, and it was a key program for co-operatives.

In regard to the other one, the secretariat, I have seen letters sent to the government, copied to me in my role as advocate for co-operatives, that question why that has been done. The letter writers are waiting for an answer. In sum, the people at the co-operatives feel that this decision and the changes in those two programs are not very advantageous to them.

• (1615)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before we resume debate, 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 Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Rights and Democracy; the hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Parks Canada.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry.

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of co-operatives to the Canadian economy.

There are around 9,000 co-ops in Canada, with 18 million members and assets of over \$252 billion. They make important contributions to the economy across the country and employ approximately 150,000 people.

Our government is squarely focused on the economy. Our government has a plan to create jobs and growth and secure our long-term prosperity. This plan remains our top priority.

In the last six years, we have worked to strengthen Canada's business climate and make it one of the most attractive in the world. We have cut taxes. We have engaged the world to promote freer trade. We have welcomed foreign investors. We have modernized our laws. We have made timely and necessary investments in Canadian industry and infrastructure.

These efforts are working, and they have not gone unnoticed. Both the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development forecast that Canada will be among the fastest-growing economies in the G7 this year and next. *Forbes* magazine has identified Canada as the number one destination to do business in the world.

This strong investment climate will benefit the co-operative sector and all Canadians, and it is particularly vital in order to help Canadians successfully navigate the uneven global economic recovery.

Looking forward, we are working to ensure that Canadians remain well positioned to take advantage of global opportunities and to build from a position of relative strength. We have a renowned and robust banking sector. We have been actively engaging international partners to open new markets, and our economy continues to add jobs and inspire growth.

Co-operatives have an important role to play in our economy, generating jobs and growth in Canada and around the world. That is why the United Nations proclaimed 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives. The International Year of Cooperatives is a unique opportunity for all co-operatives to promote their achievements and to raise awareness of the co-operative model.

Canadians have been trailblazers in this field. The first credit union in North America, the Caisse populaire de Lévis in Quebec, was founded in 1900 by Alphonse Desjardins. It has expanded substantially over the past century to become the largest co-operative financial group in Canada.

We are taking steps to facilitate continued growth. Building upon our budget 2010 commitment to allow credit unions to incorporate as federal entities under the Bank Act and operate across provinces under one regulatory umbrella, our government is working to bring these provisions into force once regulations are finalized.

Our government fully recognizes the importance of co-operatives, as they generate sustainable jobs and reinforce our economy. We are actively working to contribute to their growth.

Business of Supply

I would now like to take a few minutes to talk about how the co-operative model works and the unique role co-operatives play in the Canadian economy.

A co-operative is an enterprise owned by members who use its services. Generally established by a group of people who share a common need, co-operatives allow those people to pool their resources toward a common goal.

Today we find co-operatives across all sectors of the Canadian economy, providing financial services, health care and housing services, to name just a few, in both urban and rural communities.

The Prime Minister put it aptly during National Co-op Week last year, when he said:

Co-operatives have helped many people and organizations find solutions to social and economic challenges in their communities...

Indeed, co-operatives are an important part of the Canadian economy. Canadian co-operatives have more than 18 million members. They directly employ approximately 150,000 Canadians and can be found in communities across the country.

Non-financial co-operatives alone do almost \$36 billion a year in business. All Canadian co-operatives are estimated to hold more than \$252 billion in assets. These assets are owned by the members and communities the co-ops serve.

Lastly, at least seven co-ops are listed in Canada's top 500 companies.

Guided by the principle that members should have democratic control of the enterprise, the co-operative model ensures that each member is an equal decision-maker in the enterprise by using a one member, one vote approach.

This is a fundamental difference between co-operatives and investor-owned businesses, where a shareholder is entitled to a number of votes equivalent to the number and type of shares he or she owns in the company.

• (1620)

Another key difference is in the sharing of the surpluses of the enterprise. Under the co-operative model, the surpluses earned by the co-operative may be paid into the reserve or to the co-op's members in the form of patronage returns proportional to the business that each member does with the co-operative. In contrast, investor-owned businesses may reinvest in the company or distribute profits in the form of dividends according to the rights for each class of shares.

In Canada, co-operatives can be formed under either federal, provincial or territorial legislation. Co-operatives have been operating for over 100 years under provincial authority. In 1970, the federal government followed suit with the Canada Co-operative Associations Act. That legislation was updated in 1998 with the enactment of the Canada Cooperatives Act, which now governs federally incorporated co-ops.

This act recognizes the importance of co-operatives to the economic and social fabric of Canada. Significantly, it was originally drafted by the stakeholders themselves, the two main national organizations that represent co-operatives: the Canadian Co-

operative Association and Le Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité.

When the Canada Cooperatives Act was introduced in the House of Commons, it received all-party support. The act received royal assent in 1998 and came into force on December 31, 1999.

I will share a little about how the act works and its key features.

Co-ops that do business in more than one province can incorporate under the federal act. Interestingly, of the over 9,000 co-operatives in Canada, only 76 are federally incorporated.

One of the important features of the 1998 update to the act is that it allowed co-operatives to incorporate as a right. It eliminated the previously existing ministerial discretion. It simplified the complex rules that used to govern the incorporation of co-operatives. Now the act gives co-operatives the capacity, rights, powers and privileges of an actual person, similar to what business corporations have. In short, the 1998 act put co-operatives on a level playing field with other marketplace participants while still protecting their distinctiveness.

As with businesses incorporated under the Canada Business Corporations Act, co-operatives may incorporate, pass bylaws, elect directors and engage in economic and social activity, depending on their individual mandates. They are businesses just like other types of corporations. Indeed, many co-operatives are extremely successful businesses, having stronger returns on investment than their non-co-op counterparts.

What makes a co-operative different is how decisions are made. In investor-owned corporations, directors are elected by the shareholders. These directors oversee and manage the day-to-day operations of the corporation. The directors make and pass bylaws that drive the corporation's economic success.

Under the co-operative model, the enterprise must be organized, operated and administered on a co-operative basis. Co-ops elect directors just as other companies do, but these directors do not make bylaws, the members do. The members elect the directors and the members control the co-op.

Co-ops, just like other companies, need financing. Co-ops have several options for raising capital. The traditional method of financing co-ops is through the sale of membership shares. The 1998 act provided co-ops with a new financing opportunity. They are now allowed to issue investment shares to the public, just like other corporations, to raise capital. However, these shares do not carry the same voting rights as membership shares in recognition of the principle that members are equal decision-makers in the enterprise.

Of course, this is not the only source of financing available to co-operatives. The government provides financial support for co-ops through a number of agencies, such as the Business Development Bank of Canada, FedNor, Western Economic Diversification Canada and Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, among many others.

Looking out internationally, the government has committed almost \$20 million through the Canadian International Development Agency to the Canadian Co-operative Association's program called "sustainable livelihoods through co-operatives", which aims to promote the co-operative model to support economic growth and improved food security in communities in a number of countries, including Ghana, Uganda, Malawi, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Here at home, we have invested in co-ops across the country, including over \$2 million in the High Prairie Seed Cleaning Co-op in Alberta and \$450,000 in the Farmers' Markets Association of Manitoba.

In Quebec, we have contributed over \$100,000 to create a new co-op lead interpretation centre of the history of economic and social development of the Gatineau River.

We are supporting the Akulivik Cooperative Association with over \$200,000 for the construction of a hotel in Akulivik, which will replace the only hotel in the community and will provide more modern accommodation for business travellers and other visitors to the area.

• (1625)

With these investments, we have recognized that cooperatives can and do operate successfully under the act, and have for over a decade. They contribute to the Canadian economy in a unique way. They are innovative and entrepreneurial. Co-operatives create jobs and fuel economic growth, and this government supports them fully.

The government has been monitoring the Canada Cooperatives Act since its inception. Amendments have been made to it. For example, in 2001, the act was amended to permit electronic communications between members and the co-operative. These actions kept it aligned with our other marketplace framework laws, such as the Canada Business Corporations Act and the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act.

However, 14 years is a long time. We need to ensure that our regulatory environment promotes competition, investment and economic growth. Co-operatives are an important part of that growth.

Before I conclude, I have the following amendment to the motion to ensure that this issue is studied in the appropriate committee: That the motion be amended by: (a) replacing the words "a special committee be appointed to" with "the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology"; and (b) deleting in section (e) the following words "and that the committee consist of twelve members which shall include seven members from the government party, four members from the official opposition and one member from the Liberal Party, provided that the chair is from the government party; that in addition to the chair, there be one vice-chair from each of the opposition parties; that the committee have all of the powers of a standing committee as provided in the Standing Orders, as well as the power to travel, accompanied by the necessary staff, inside and outside of Canada, subject to the usual authorization from the House; that the members to serve on the said committee be appointed by the whip of each party depositing with the Clerk of the House a list of his or her party's members of the committee no later than June 8, 2012; that the quorum of the special committee be seven

Business of Supply

members for any proceedings, provided that at least a member of the opposition and of the government party be present; that membership substitutions be permitted to be made from time to time, if required, in a manner provided for in Standing Order 114(2).

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Pursuant to Standing Order 85, it is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. I therefore ask the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier whether he consents to this amendment being moved.

The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during my speech, I mentioned the reasons for my answer.

The committee will be called upon to consider issues of housing, child care, health, agriculture and finance, and not only industry. A bill in this House, a report from the Auditor General or private members bills could interrupt the work of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. The work cannot, therefore, be guaranteed. It is for this reason, and because of the complexity and the need to not interrupt proceedings, that I cannot accept the proposed amendment.

• (1630)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): There is no consent. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 85 the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from the industry committee and also for the proposition of having the industry committee being part of the committee that would be dealing with co-operatives.

Upon hearing the announcement of the cuts to the co-operative development initiative program that was providing funding for the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat, as well as other related funding that was cut in the recent budget, Denyse Guy, executive director of the Canadian Co-operative Association, said:

If the government is truly committed to creating jobs and fostering innovation, we can't understand why it would cut a program that cost very little—just over \$4 million a year—and made a difference in hundreds of communities across the country.

I would like to hear his comments on why the budget cuts for these very meaningful programs that helped co-operatives in all regions of Canada.

Mr. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, perhaps, as members of industry committee, we will get a chance to work on this issue in the future.

In regard to the specific question, as the member knows the Government of Canada delivered the economic action plan on March 29 to bolster Canada's fundamental strengths and address the important challenges confronting the economy over the long term, including a significant reduction to the deficit.

Business of Supply

Over the past year, the government has conducted a comprehensive review of direct program spending by federal departments and agencies and identified a number of opportunities to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations, programs and services for Canadians.

When we look at the government's record, 750,000 net new jobs have been created in the Canadian economy since July 2009, a record that is the envy of the world.

As a government, we want to get our budget balanced within the short term so we can ensure the strength of the Canadian economy in the long term.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to follow up on the question just raised, I would like to point out to the House what the CDI really is. Government documents state, "The co-operative development initiative managed by the Co-operatives Secretariat is the first federal program specifically designed to research and test the co-operative model and to assist in the development of co-operatives".

Those are wonderful words from the other side, wonderful words in terms of its support of co-operatives and everything they do, but the government is undermining those very co-operatives by cutting the program 75%. Co-operatives, as has been said by all speakers today, are an important part of the rural economy. It is because of those co-operatives that jobs are being created.

Again, would the government be willing to reconsider the CDI program and not cut it? If it really means what it says in terms of improving the economy, then that program should be left in place so that co-operatives can grow and build and have community support to see that the economy survives in rural Canada as well?

Mr. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, I referred to 750,000 net new jobs in the Canadian economy since July 2009, 90% of which are full-time jobs and most of them high-paying jobs. Those jobs are not just in urban centres. Those jobs exist across the board in Canada, both in the urban economy and the rural economy.

To the member's point, we can take a look at the funding that is still being provided to co-operatives through, for example, the regional development agencies, and I mentioned that in my speech.

The hon. member is from Atlantic Canada and he might be interested to know about some of the funding through ACOA, for example: \$57,000 to the Cooperative des Pecheurs de Baie Ste. Anne to hire experts to prepare and implement a restructuring plan; the Northumberland Co-operative Limited to improve product shelf life and quality; and Tignish Fisheries Co-operative Association, Ltd., for efficiency improvements within processing operations.

I can read off many more examples of how this government has made significant investments in co-operatives. We see the significant success that has developed out of that.

• (1635)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member is wrong in his last response. Last week the ACOA minister cut all the economic development—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The member will know that is a matter of debate, not a point of order.

The hon. member for Medicine Hat.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that my wife has a membership in a Medicine Hat co-op and through that membership we buy a lot of goods. I know for a fact that co-operatives are profitable. My wife gets an annual dividend, which is very nice.

A lot of people are not aware of co-operatives. Could the hon. member advise us of any ideas that he might have which would help people across the country become members and participate in the co-operative lifestyle?

Mr. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, the starting point would be to refer Canadians to the speech I gave because there are significant examples there.

If we want to talk about the strength of co-operatives in Canada, we need only look at the numbers. Co-operatives have more than \$252 billion in assets. They are owned by their members and the communities they serve, and the hon. member spoke to that.

The survival rate of co-ops is higher than that of traditional businesses. A 2008 study in Quebec, for example, found that 62% of new co-ops are still operating after five years, compared with 35% for other businesses.

There are more than 90,000 co-ops in Canada. They exist across the country. There are 18 million members across the country, which is evidence that the co-operative community, the co-operative model, is thriving in Canada under this government.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned by the cuts, the loss of \$4 million to the co-operative development initiative, particularly because 2012 is the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives.

We talk about economic development and the government's economic action plan. I would appeal to the member that we use this opposition day debate to explore ways, through greater support and investment in the tools that help co-operatives and credit unions, to expand their operations. That expands job opportunities. That is part of an economic action plan. I would ask my hon. friend if there is not scope to support the motion today.

Mr. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, since the hon. member comes from a western riding, I will use the opportunity to talk about some of the investments that have been made through Western Economic Diversification.

The Bison Feeder Co-operative of Saskatchewan, Kronau Community Recreation Co-operative, Lucky Lake Co-operative Community Centre, High Prairie Seed Cleaning Co-op, which I mentioned earlier, Venables Valley Producers Co-op and the Farmers' Markets Association of Manitoba co-op are significant examples of investments that have been made through WED with regard to co-operatives.

Business of Supply

As I mentioned in my speech, there will continue to be programs that are available to co-operatives just like they are available to non-co-op enterprises through the Business Development Bank of Canada and through different regional development agencies.

Co-ops across the country can take advantage of those tremendous opportunities, but, most importantly, they will be able to take advantage of one of the strongest economies in the developed world right in Canada.

• (1640)

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the cutbacks are not only affecting co-operatives.

For example, ACOA, which is responsible for economic development in the Atlantic regions, had its budget cut by \$18 million. There may have been investments in co-operatives, but now that \$18 million has been cut from the ACOA budget—and with the cutbacks to economic development in every region of the Atlantic—how can the member say that his government is going to do the right thing in the future? Bill C-38 proposes an \$18 million cutback to regional economic development.

[English]

Mr. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, the entire point of this conversation is to talk about the future. In the future, Canada will have a balanced budget before most industrialized countries around the world. We will be in a stronger competitive position. We can already see the momentum that is building. We have, as I have mentioned a couple of times, over 750,000 net new jobs in Canada. That is over 750,000 Canadians who are working today who were not working in July 2009. That is very significant.

Because of that, co-operatives, non-co-op enterprises, workers, companies and families across the country will be better served by the measures we are taking today.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the lockout of Rio Tinto Alcan employees and the layoff of Electro-Motive Diesel workers in London sends a clear message: it is no longer possible to oppose the economic and sustainable development of our resources and communities.

Responsible economic policy must factor in the environmental and social costs that result from our collective choices. Currently, we risk placing a huge environmental, economic and social millstone around the necks of future generations. On Friday, the government made another clear choice against the interests of communities by reneging on its commitment to work with the opposition and communities to fix some of the weak links in the Investment Canada Act.

The NDP has always been a strong proponent of the co-operative movement, which supports grassroots businesses. These businesses truly understand that their well-being and that of the community are linked. It is therefore quite fitting, in this the International Year of Cooperatives, that I rise to speak to the Liberal Party motion. I also take this opportunity to inform the Speaker that I will have the honour of sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Welland.

Co-operatives have been part of our history for over 100 years. They have helped build our economy and our communities. According to the Canadian Co-operative Association, over 18 million people are members of Canadian co-operatives and credit unions and there are over 9,000 co-operatives in Canada. That means that four in 10 Canadians are members of a co-operative.

According to the Co-operatives Secretariat, co-operatives contribute some \$252 billion to the economy, money that does not go to just a few shareholders, but is distributed within the communities they serve. Better still, the co-operative movement creates jobs, employing over 155,000 people.

Canada has many co-operatives, including Co-op, The Co-operators—as the Conservative member just mentioned, UFA, Co-op Atlantic, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Arctic Co-operatives Limited and Vancity. In Quebec, Desjardins, Agropur, the Coop fédérée and many others are among Canada's largest co-operative movements and have become major economic players. This is proof positive that there is strength in numbers. The co-operative movement continues to make a significant contribution to society through the strength of its members and the principles of the movement.

My riding, LaSalle—Émard, is home to a number of innovative and successful co-operatives. They create good local jobs and contribute to economic development in our neighbourhoods. For example, Café Bistro Monk, a fun and friendly place, is doing so much to help revitalize Monk Street. The Coopérative Enfance Famille, which manages the centralized waiting list for child care services in Montreal, Mauricie and central Quebec, helps parents find day care spots and relieves day care centres of some of their administrative burden.

• (1645)

Finally, I should also mention the Coopératives jeunesse de services, which are managed by the Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi LaSalle and the Carrefour jeunesse-emploi du Sud-Ouest and provide summer jobs for high school students. In addition to giving students their first job experience in the community, this excellent initiative also provides young participants with the opportunity to do different tasks and to assume responsibility for managing various contracts, revenues and resources.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Welland.

The resiliency of co-operatives has been proven. A study by Quebec's department of economic development, innovation and export trade indicates that the long-term survival rate of co-operatives is almost twice—I did say twice—that of investor-owned businesses. That is quite a record.

Co-operatives are democratic enterprises that seek to meet the social and economic needs of their members. The underlying values of the movement are the same ones that the NDP defends: working together and fostering inclusion, confidence and fairness among citizens. Co-operatives will be there to face the ever-increasing challenges of our society by providing an innovative model and real solutions that meet the needs of the people in the community.

Business of Supply

For over 20 years, Quebec has had a co-operative investment plan that has helped a number of co-operatives develop and flourish, and has also helped generate \$393 million in new investments in co-operatives.

To much fanfare, Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food recently reaffirmed his government's commitment to the co-operative movement in this International Year of Cooperatives, recognized by the UN. Shortly thereafter, this same minister cut \$4 million from the Conseil de développement coopératif and the Co-operative Development Initiative. This hypocrisy inspired Denyse Guy, from the Canadian Co-operative Association, to say:

• (1650)

[English]

If the government is truly committed to creating jobs and fostering innovation, we can't understand why it would cut a program that cost very little...and made a difference in hundreds of communities across the country.... It created jobs, fostered innovation, and gave co-operatives the ability to leverage additional funds at the provincial and community levels.

[Translation]

I would be remiss if I did not mention that cuts to funding for housing co-operatives and the federal government's withdrawal of support is jeopardizing this type of housing, particularly in my riding. These housing co-operatives are absolutely crucial. They enable low-income families and seniors to live decent lives.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I support the Liberal Party's motion to create a committee that would examine the importance of co-operatives, even though I believe that is already clear. I would like to add that this motion could go much further by getting straight to the point and calling on the government to take action.

The government must start by reinstating the \$4 million in funding for the Co-operative Development Initiative that it recently cut. We must work with regional economic development agencies and support the development of the co-operative movement.

The NDP supports the development of a co-operative investment plan that could help rural communities tackle the problem of declining population.

In this International Year of Cooperatives, the very least that Canada could do is to show its good will by supporting these important vectors of our economy and society.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from LaSalle—Émard for her passionate speech on the subject of co-operatives. I know that she is very involved in her community and the co-operatives there.

I find it very interesting that, at the end of her speech, my colleague suggested ways of finding solutions, that is, how we can go further in supporting these co-operatives that are important players in the economy and that provide services that suit the needs of communities.

Could my colleague tell us a little more about what the co-operatives are asking? Perhaps she is aware of the needs and requirements of co-operatives at this time. How can we promote the development of co-operatives in Quebec and Canada?

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, co-operatives are a key economic vector. Often what they are looking for is start-up capital. After that, they are often able to finance their own operations. Often, they need a secretariat or a location.

The Co-operatives Secretariat acted as a facilitator to help groups of people who wanted to start co-operatives. That is what I think the federal government's role would be: to provide start-up funding and also start-up assistance for co-operatives.

[English]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member a question because the parliamentary secretary for the Minister of Industry tried to make it sound like other agencies, like federal development agencies, are covering off for the cuts to the CDI. I know in Atlantic Canada they are not because 10 days ago the minister in charge of ACOA cut every regional economic development organization in Atlantic Canada, though they were responsible for 130 jobs last year and one of them manages \$9 million worth of assets.

We have to look at the whole picture in terms of the government's strategy. I believe there is a real attack by this government on rural Canada. It is cutting back on economic development agencies. It is cutting the CDI, which is important, while it is giving big business all the advantages, such as reducing corporate taxes and so forth.

Could the member tell us, in terms of the big picture not only of co-operatives but of other areas, where there is federal government involvement that is undermining the ability of rural communities and co-operatives in rural Canada to survive and prosper along with the rest of the country? This is not a country that is just based on oil. It is a country that should be based on community.

• (1655)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague expressed very clearly the danger of weakening our communities by favouring one kind of industry.

We must remember that, as a government, we must govern for all communities. One of Canada's basic characteristics is in fact the wealth of its communities, the diversity of its regions and the various places that people live in and have developed. There is a real danger because, by weakening our rural areas and our remote areas, little by little we are dismantling the very identity of our country.

I think that funding for co-operatives—which are, as my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard said so clearly, businesses or economic vectors that exactly suit the needs of their communities and regions—is absolutely vital if we want to make our huge, beautiful country a country that is vibrant and dynamic, no matter where we live.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her great words about the co-operative movement, whether it be credit unions, co-ops in the agriculture sector, or housing.

It reminds me of a family that came here in the early 1960s to work in the shipyards of this great country. The family wanted to buy a house. The parents went to the bank to borrow money. It was a household where one of the parents had worked for a couple of years and had a work history in this country, albeit a short one, because the family had only been here about two years. The parents wanted to buy a house. That house was worth \$15,000. Today \$15,000 would not get anyone a garage, never mind a house. The family was looking to put down roots. The parents had the ability to pay the mortgage and had a small down payment. They wanted to settle in the community and provide a home for their children.

Those parents went from bank to bank asking for a loan and they were denied every single solitary time, even though there was a work history and an income stream. The head of the family, who was a man, was working in the auto sector at GM and was one of the highest paid factory workers in the Niagara region at the time. He was a skilled tradesperson making a very good wage and working overtime. One day while that man was at work, a gentleman came around and asked him if he would like to be a member of the credit union. The man said it sounded great to him. He had come from a place where the co-op movement was very successful. It was an enlightened movement which a lot of folks participated in, whether it was the co-operative store where people bought their groceries or other co-operative movements to which the man had belonged.

The gentleman signed him up to the credit union and said if the man needed anything, he should come to see him. The man said he wanted to get a mortgage so he could buy a house for his family. In those days that gentlemen would have been called the credit union man. Credit union men signed people up at their places of work. The credit union man would be someone people worked with. The credit union men were workmates of the people who were asked if they would like to join and be part of the co-operative movement.

The man looking for the loan said yes. The credit union man said he would make sure he got an appointment to apply for a mortgage. The man and his wife went to the credit union, asked for a mortgage to buy a small home and the credit union said yes.

Who were those folks? They were my father and mother. They lived in 12 different places. They rented place after place after place and dragged five kids behind them, because they could not find a place to live and the banks would not give them a mortgage, but the credit union would. My father to his dying day said to trust the credit union and the co-operative movement and be leery of the banks. I was then and I am now.

It is not to say that I do not have a bank account. I do, but I have done most of my life's financial work—if I can call it work; it is usually debt when one has children, a mortgage and car loans. Nonetheless, I belong to the credit union. It is a great institution that is going to lose the ability to do that great work because of such a shortsighted government. One would think the government was

being asked for hundreds of millions of dollars, when indeed it is a pittance.

I wrote a letter to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food about the CDI. I asked why the government was not going to fund it. Let me read from the minister's response. It stated, "To address the need to reduce the federal deficit, over the past year the Government conducted a comprehensive"—comprehensive, the minister said—"review of direct program spending by federal departments and agencies. As a result...the Co-operative Development Initiative is being discontinued". That letter to me was signed by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

What comprehensive review? We are actually now being asked to do a comprehensive review of the CDI. I have to thank my colleagues in the Liberal Party for doing that.

• (1700)

I congratulate the member for Malpeque for standing up for co-ops. I know they play an important role in Prince Edward Island and in rural parts right across this great country. When we go to the rural parts of this country, which I know my friend from Malpeque has done, as I have done, when we go to Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, to the northern parts of this country, whether it be in Ontario or in Quebec, and look at what institutions are in those small towns, it is the co-operatives, not the big banks. In the case of a financial institution, it is usually a small credit union. There might be only a couple of folks looking after the place, but I will guarantee that when people walk through that door, they will ask how they are doing and call them by their first name. It is about that connectedness to community.

When people are members of a co-operative, whether it be a credit union, co-operative housing, or whatever it happens to be, they own it. It is not owned by some board members and shareholders somewhere who are looking to extract profit after profit. The profit comes back to the members. What I think is the remarkable thing about co-ops is that the members get to decide what to do with it. They can get the share value back, which happens with many credit unions, or they can reinvest it, as in co-op housing. With co-op housing, if the members decide they need to fix something, they collectively come together and make a decision. There is no one outside who is worried about making an additional five bucks off the backs of folks. They can take that extra \$5 and decide to do something with it, which would probably help a lot more folks than just someone putting it in his pocket.

What a remarkable thing. It is absolutely fascinating that folks would want to come together to help one another. Imagine that. We do not hear much of that from the other side. It is a dog-eat-dog world on the other side, it seems, instead of this sense of collectivism.

When we look at collective attributes across this country, one need look no further than the Canadian Wheat Board. What did we see the other side do? The government axed it.

Business of Supply

I find it hugely ironic that in the very year which the UN has declared is the International Year of Cooperatives, the minister thinks it is a wonderful thing, makes a great proclamation, makes a nice speech about it, and his very first act around the co-operative movement is to take away the money that helps build it. The minister may want to think about whether he wants to retract what he said about the co-operative movement in the International Year of Cooperatives. Clearly, actions speak louder than words, as one is told. If the action is that the government is going to de-fund it, then perhaps the words were meaningless.

When we look at the co-operative movement, we have to ask ourselves, do we really believe in entrepreneurs? Are entrepreneurs individuals working only on behalf of themselves or their families, perhaps, if we want to use that model? Or can entrepreneurs come together as a collective group and actually work on behalf of each other so that they all benefit?

I would argue they can. I would argue that entrepreneurs are not always single-minded in the sense that they want only themselves to get ahead, through their efforts, whatever those efforts happen to be, whatever endeavour they may take up. In the co-operative movement, there are folks who come together who are entrepreneurial in spirit and in how they want to do things and run a business, but they want to do it as a collective and are happy to share the rewards with others who come together with them to work.

One should celebrate that. One should look at that and see it as another model for economic development. It is important to this country and has a uniqueness in rural Canada that has not gone away. It has taken its lumps and bumps along the way. We have seen a lot of things in rural Canada, in northern Canada and out west on the Prairies. We have seen the demise of some, but we have also seen the growth of many others.

My colleague mentioned some numbers. In this country, there are 18 million members who belong to co-operatives. Nine thousand co-operatives are in housing. Some 2,200 housing co-operatives are home to about 250,000 individuals. There are 1,300 agricultural co-ops.

• (1705)

We talk a lot about agriculture in this House and it seems to me it is a movement that is critical for agriculture producers. Many agriculture producers I have spoken to on the Prairies greatly appreciate those co-operatives. It seems to me that the government ought to rethink. Perhaps we will get a recommendation if we do pass this motion, and I hope we do because we certainly support it. If the committee comes up with a suggestion to reinstate the funding, I would suggest to my colleagues across the way that maybe that is what they ought to do, at least for those in the agriculture sector, where 1,300 agriculture co-operatives do great work on behalf of farmers and those communities.

I encourage the other side to support this motion. Let us get a committee to consider this matter. We would like to see some other things done. Let us see if we cannot restore the funding and the momentum for co-operatives across this country. Let us show them that we believe in them and that we want to help them build because they are important to our communities and to individuals.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Welland has travelled widely in western Canada and knows how important the pool movement was in western Canada. At one time farmers actually owned all the elevator infrastructure in western Canada with no debt. Those elevators were part of the community. For whatever reason, that has all been lost now and there are none of those pools left. Worse yet, the last protection that grain producers had in western Canada was the Canadian Wheat Board and the authority for it to work effectively has been taken away by the Government of Canada.

The co-op movement in the west came out strenuously against the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in his move to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. We know the Government of Canada attacks charities that go against the government. The government has done away with KAIROS.

Does the member for Welland think there is any possibility that having CDI under the minister's department, there is a sense of vindictiveness here? Does he think it is a matter of getting even with the co-op movement for having spoken against him, regardless of the consequences in rural communities?

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Malpeque for the work he has done on behalf of farmers. We sat together on the agriculture committee in the last Parliament.

He is correct when it comes to the sense of a collective, where folks want to work together for something, as they did with the Canadian Wheat Board. As I have said many times in this House, it was for those who belonged to the Canadian Wheat Board to decide whether they wanted it to continue, and the government abrogated their right. They should have been allowed to decide whether they wanted to keep it and then we would abide by their decision as it was in the act, rather than simply change the act.

It seems the government takes a dim view to any sort of collective movement and does not like it. I would say to the Conservatives that there is no shame in being part of a collective because it is of one's free will to belong. If that is my choice, I ought to be allowed. There ought not to be impediments. It is my choice to be part of that free association of a collective movement. The government ought to stay out of my way and allow me to do that, not throw up roadblocks, not be detrimental in its attitude toward—

• (1710)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. I do not wish to interrupt the member, but the time is limited and there are other members who wish to pose questions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank both my colleagues for their very eloquent speeches.

I would like to come back to the deplorable attitude of the Conservatives who are making these cuts, even while we are celebrating the International Year of Cooperatives.

Is this merely a case of a case of laziness or, as we have seen on a number of occasions on different issues, simple favouritism for private enterprise as a whole, as opposed to the interests of the co-operative movement for ordinary Canadians?

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to collective organizations, one of the greatest collective pools we know is employment insurance. People put money in to ensure that those who are marginalized by unemployment are helped out. Those who continue to work continue to pay in. We do not pay in, and that is an error in the government's choices. We should actually pay into employment insurance. We never collect it, but we should at least pay it. We should lead by example. That is a collective organization that actually pools money together. Never mind the pooled registered pension plan that the Conservatives have dreamed up; let us talk about the pooled savings plan that helps people in case they become unemployed. That is a true collective movement. It is about helping people. People pay into it while they are working and are willing to let other people draw the benefits when those people are not working. That is a true collective movement in which the members look after one another, rather than the sense of showing someone the door, wishing him the best and hoping it does not rain because he does not have an umbrella.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before I recognize the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, I will let her know that she only has about two minutes. I will have to interrupt her at 5:15 as this is the end of government orders for this afternoon.

The hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain.

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague pointed out earlier, I had intended to speak about the co-operative in Notre-Dame-de-Montauban, but I am simply going to talk about the cuts made by the federal government, which has distinguished itself by cutting the services of the Co-operatives Secretariat.

The latest federal budget reduced grants to Canada's co-operatives still further, despite the fact that they are on the front line in our rural communities. Technical support for the development of co-operatives in Canada, the only federal government program specifically for co-operatives, has shrunk to almost nothing. The budget for the specific program called the co-operative development initiative has been eliminated, without any alternatives being set up.

Nevertheless, the Conservatives, who boasted about being the all-out champions of rural development, have scrapped one of the few development initiatives for small and medium-sized communities in Canada in one fell swoop.

We are happy to see the co-operative movement set up new structures in Mauricie, but we hope that this model, the final barrier against the decline of our towns and villages, will develop throughout the area. We will have to invest the funds needed for the co-operatives' start-up in order to help the rural communities take control and ensure the stability of their towns, I could even say, of our towns.

I would like to ask the ministers opposite if they can tell me exactly how the communities should attract entrepreneurs to the area if they cannot even ensure the survival of local businesses. Rural development, whether agricultural, mining, industrial or business-related, is inextricably linked to maintaining basic services.

● (1715)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. That is all the time provided for the business of supply.

[English]

It being 5:15, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, just as a matter of clarity on that last vote. Is it fair to say that the motion was carried unanimously?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I appreciate the intervention by the hon. member for Wascana. The Journals will show that the motion was adopted. Generally it does not add the additional language that it was unanimous, but certainly hon. members present will understand that to be the case.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I found a precedent that occurred when a previous Speaker, John Fraser, was in the Chair in 1987. All members present conceded that the motion as adopted was in fact unanimous and should be recorded as such. The Speaker at the time said that the House was the master of its own proceedings and should all members unanimously consent that the motion that was carried unanimously should be recorded as such, the Speaker would record it as such.

I ask if all members think that is a good idea?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands seeking unanimous consent that the motion be declared adopted unanimously?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly how I wish I had put it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands have the consent of the House for her proposal?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I ask that you see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[Translation]

GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION

The House resumed from May 17 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on motion M-273.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

• (1800)

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

(Division No. 234)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brisson
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Cleary
Coderre	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseauit
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Karygiannis	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach

Rae	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel	Valeriote — 134

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKenzie	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Oliver
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Poillievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl

Private Members' Business

Sweet
Toews
Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

Tilson
Trost
Truppe
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 158

Karygiannis
Lamoureux
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
MacAulay
Marston
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Patry
Perreault
Plamondon
Rae
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Toone
Turnel

Kellway
Lapointe
Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Liu
Mai
Martin
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Pécelet
Pilon
Quach
Rafferty
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
St-Denis
Stoffer
Thibeault
Tremblay
Valeriote — 134

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

The House resumed from May 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-326, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act (biweekly payment of benefits), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-326 under Private Members' Business.

• (1810)

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

(Division No. 235)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Choquette
Christopherson
Coderre
Cotler
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Foote
Freeman
Garneau
Genest
Giguère
Goodale
Grogulé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu
Hyer

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brisson
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Chisholm
Chow
Cleary
Côté
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Fortin
Fry
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hassainia
Hughes
Jacob

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Ashfield
Baird
Benoit
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Leaf
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukivski
MacKenzie
McColeman

NAYS

Members

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong
Aspin
Bateman
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chong
Clement
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Gill
Googen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
Hoepfner
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
Mayer
McLeod

Private Members' Business

Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Oliver
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toews	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 158

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

It being 6:10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

* * *

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC) moved that Bill C-304, an act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act (protecting freedom), be read the third time and passed.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am happy to be back in the House of Commons once again to debate my private member's bill, C-304, an act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act (protecting freedom).

I would like to thank justice committee for its support, as well as the many witnesses who took time out of their busy schedules to discuss Bill C-304 and freedom of speech within committee. It is these honest and open dialogues which have moulded our great nation and will continue to advance our society into the future.

Moving a private member's bill through the House of Commons has been a tremendous experience, one that has led to many obvious ups and downs. However, it has been one that has garnered me the opportunity to work more closely with my fellow colleagues in both chambers. I would like to take this time to thank my colleagues for both their support and their constructive criticism.

It has also given me the opportunity to travel our great country from coast to coast to discuss this issue with Canadians. It is from them that I have really received the passion for freedom of speech within our country. I would like to thank Canadians for their support on this.

At a practical level, I would like to thank my staff member Ameer Pundick for tremendous work on this bill. Most important, the pressures that moving a private member's bill through the House can create on one's schedule means that there is more pressure on the family. I would like to thank my parents, my son Eastin and my daughter Ayden for their patience and most important my wife Amel for her tremendous support. She truly is the rock of our family.

Freedom of expression is one of the cornerstones of our great democracy, a cornerstone which is eroding away due to unnecessary censorship by an overzealous bureaucracy. Regulating speech is a dangerous idea and not compatible with the principles of a free society. As Thomas Jefferson said, "the only security of all is a free press".

My private member's bill C-304 would help protect and enhance this fundamental freedom, because without freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of assembly hold no value. Freedom of speech truly is the bedrock upon which all other freedoms are based.

Bill C-304 calls for the repeal of section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act in order to ensure that freedom of speech is preserved and promoted through an open, transparent and democratic process, which is the Criminal Code of Canada.

Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act has been a contentious topic for a number of years. It has been widely acknowledged that it impedes section 2(b) of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states that every individual has the fundamental freedoms that are "freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication".

This conflict between section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act and section 2(b) of the charter was reaffirmed in 2008 by Professor Richard Moon, who was hand-picked by the Canadian Human Rights Commission to review this act. Professor Moon clearly stated, on page 31 of his report, "The principal recommendation of this report is that section 13 be repealed so that the censorship of Internet hate speech is dealt with exclusively by the criminal law."

Professor Moon goes on to highlight a quote from the Cohen Committee, which states that "No civil statute can create a moral standard equivalent to that of criminal law". This quote perfectly summarizes the unparalleled ability of the Criminal Code to properly address sensitive issues while maintaining a balanced approach.

It is also important to note that the conflict between section 13 and the charter was reaffirmed in 2009 by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal itself, which found section 13 to be unconstitutional.

Since Bill C-304 was first introduced in the House of Commons I have had opportunities to attend a number of conferences and annual meetings across Canada to discuss the content of the bill, the repealing of section 13 and the implications that it would have on our country.

Private Members' Business

Most people were astounded when they heard for the first time that our fundamental freedoms can be overruled by a quasi-judicial body that feels that something someone said was likely to have exposed another individual or group to hatred or contempt. That is right, the individual simply had to feel that it was likely to do this.

Canadians find it difficult to believe that such a loosely written and vague law has the power to undermine the fundamental rights that Canada so proudly bases its democracy upon, which men and women have given their lives defending.

● (1815)

While section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act may have been implemented with well-meaning intentions in an effort to combat discrimination and hate speech, the actual implications reach much further, chilling free speech and stifling the growth and development of our society. It is in this zone of ambiguity and the ripple effect that section 13 creates that we should all be concerned. Subsection 13(1) states:

It is a discriminatory practice for a person or a group of persons acting in concert to communicate telephonically or to cause to be so communicated, repeatedly, in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a telecommunication undertaking within the legislative authority of Parliament, any matter that is likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact that that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination.

There is it right there: “any matter that is likely to expose a person”.

Subsection 13(2) goes on to extend this law to matters that are communicated by means of computer and the Internet. What this really means is that the Canadian Human Rights Commission and Canadian Human Rights Tribunal only have to feel that one is “likely” to have offended someone. This is not a narrowly defined legal definition, which would be far more appropriate.

Under section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, truth is not a defence and intent is not a defence. One no longer has the right to due process, the right to a speedy trial or the right to an attorney. It is alarming that until recently the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal had a 100% conviction rate. This is not a sign of vindication; rather, it neglects to acknowledge that 90% of defendants fail to obtain legal advice because they simply cannot afford it, while at the same time the legal costs of the plaintiffs are fully covered. This is simply un-Canadian.

As a boy born and raised in northern Alberta, I have grown up obsessed with hockey. My son has followed in my footsteps. His favourite hockey player is Sidney Crosby of the Pittsburgh Penguins. I often compare this scenario to a hockey game. Placing well-paid human rights lawyers up against defendants who generally have little to no background in the legal field is like placing a recreational hockey team up against Sidney Crosby and the Pittsburgh Penguins and being surprised when the professional team wins again and again and again. This approach simply makes no sense, as the tables are obviously tipped in favour of the professional team or, in this case, the human rights lawyers.

These are not the characteristics of an open and democratic society that promotes equality and fairness. These basic provisions of law are considered to be natural rights by Canadians and are provided to any other individual in any other court in Canada under the Criminal

Code. This is a clear depiction of what happens when censorship and bureaucracy are allowed to run amok. This is one of the reasons I have introduced Bill C-304, protecting freedom, in an effort to reconstruct freedom of expression as a cornerstone of our great country.

To achieve this, complaints must be directed to a fair, open and transparent judicial system, not a broken system that prides itself in operating behind closed doors.

By repealing section 13 from the Canadian Human Rights Act, we would give back to Canadians the right to be offended, and individuals will have the recourse to hate speech through the Criminal Code of Canada. The continued use of the Criminal Code to address hate messaging would ensure that all individuals are protected from threatening, discriminatory acts while preserving the fundamental right to freedom of expression. It would give back the right to fair, open and transparent trial and the right for people to face their accusers. It would make defences such as truth or intent allowable. It would even give back the right to recover costs should the claim be dismissed.

True hate speech is a serious crime and one that needs to be reviewed by a real court and investigated by real police officers. The Criminal Code has been tried and tested. It is ingrained with a system of checks and balances, a system to which society has entrusted its fundamental freedoms, a system society has seen as fit to enforce the rule of law in our great country. Justice is not served when it is hidden in the dark alleys of quasi-judicial bodies.

The solution here is not to take a band-aid approach and address the superficial inadequacies of section 13, as some have suggested. The fundamental deficiencies and broken structure would still be there if we did that. These issues cannot simply be fixed through amendments, as section 13 would still be imposed under the discretion of a subjective, quasi-judicial system, and the fundamental principles that guide the implementation of section 13 would continue to create a two-tiered system of hate speech in which one form of hate speech would be deemed worse than another. This is simply not appropriate.

● (1820)

Hate speech is a very serious issue and must be dealt with appropriately, with police investigations and appropriate penalties. True hate speech, speech intended to incite hatred and subject persons of an identifiable group to harm, deserves more than a slap on the wrist and should be carefully examined under the Criminal Code, which already contains hate speech provisions and which is a far more appropriate fit.

Opponents of my private member's bill have voiced their concerns on multiple occasions regarding the burden of proof associated with the Criminal Code being too great and too cumbersome. I would like to take this opportunity to address this argument one more time.

Private Members' Business

The burden of proof under the Criminal Code is indeed more comprehensive; however, I would argue that due to the seriousness of these allegations, it is in fact far more appropriate to apply the standard of proof beyond any reasonable doubt than the standard of a balance of probabilities. What my opponents fail to recognize is that in the highly subjective system currently employed by section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, the standard of proof only becomes a significant issue when facts are actually disputed. My question in return is this: should facts not need to be concrete prior to overruling a fundamental right protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, protected by our forefathers?

I believe the solution is to use the laws we already have and to provide authorities with the tools and support necessary. This step would ensure a successful transition in which true democracy and freedom of speech can thrive so that society can continue to grow and adapt peacefully in our country. It is through freedom of speech and expression that we change governments, not through riots and revolts. It is how we test societal norms and successfully develop our nation. It is through freedom of expression that we have shaped, and will continue to shape, our great country.

As I have stated before, this is an issue for all Canadians. Freedom of speech is equally important whether one is in the opposition or the government. This is not an issue of blue versus orange or red. This is not an issue of right versus left. This is an issue of freedom, transparency and balance for all Canadians.

With that, I would like to challenge all members to look beyond the intent of section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act and truly examine its structure and implications and consider what we, as a free and democratic country, are willing to give up. It is time to take a stand to protect our fundamental freedoms and ensure that our children and future Canadians are not denied these basic rights through unnecessary censorship and bureaucracy.

•(1825)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member from Westlock—St. Paul.

The protection that existed under section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, which also provided protection against hate messages and discrimination against women does not exist within the Criminal Code, despite the supposed protection of section 319. What does the member think of that argument?

There is a huge hole that his bill will only make worse.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Storseth: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her question. I have appreciated the opportunity to work with her on several issues in regard to my private member's bill. As I have done in the past, I once again offer to sit with her and address any of the concerns that she may have so that we can help work these out.

At the end of the day, it is truly important that we realize what the bill is fundamentally about. It is about regaining the total freedom of speech that is so important in our country.

As I have said before, this should not be an issue that is balanced between opposition and government. This is a private member's bill. I am willing to work with the opposition, as I have all along. I have the support of some members of the opposition party. I hope that on third and final reading we will have more support, because this is an issue that is important to all Canadians. As I have travelled across our country, I have noticed that no matter which political party people support, they support freedom of speech and the protection of freedom.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. friend from Westlock—St. Paul for his effort in putting forward the bill.

My initial reaction to any human rights code is that we have to defend it. I have also, though, had a number of constituents come to speak with me who are very supportive of this private member's bill. I want to declare myself as open-minded. I have to confess that I do not know how I am going to vote on this private member's bill.

I would like to ask my hon. friend who has put this motion forward if he can persuade me that when we change the legislation, as he is proposing in this private member's bill, we would have adequate tools to deal with the very issue that was just put forward by my colleague from the official opposition. Would women's rights or hate speech against women be inadequately protected if we changed the legislation?

•(1830)

Mr. Brian Storseth: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her open-mindedness. It is truly the spirit of democracy in which we are all sent here.

I believe what the bill would do is move hate speech provisions to the Criminal Code. This is something that is very important to realize. I believe this would actually enhance protections against hate speech. These are serious crimes. These are not crimes that a bureaucrat should be investigating through the back alleys of quasi-judicial bodies. These are crimes that should be investigated by police officers. Both sides should have access to lawyers, and the trial should be presided over by a judge. This is a serious issue and a serious crime.

I believe that moving hate speech to where it belongs in Canada, which is the Criminal Code of Canada, would actually enhance hate speech provisions in our democracy and at the same time enhance freedom of speech on the Internet and in other means of communication, which are now being used more and more by youth today to enhance our democracy.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am privileged to rise tonight to speak to Bill C-304 which is before us. My main purpose in speaking today is to ask the question of what happens after this bill, if it passes. I suggest we need to indeed fill a gap, not simply with respect to the fact that gender protection will be lost unless something is done in a hurry, but some of the distinct benefits of civil remedies in this area will also go by the board. We cannot simply rely on the Criminal Code. That is my main message.

Private Members' Business

It is important to remind ourselves that section 13 has been part of the Canadian Human Rights Act since its enactment in 1977. It was designed to address at the beginning what we now call robocalls, automated repeat calls that disseminate hate messages on the grounds that are protected in the Canadian Human Rights Act. Afterward, Internet websites and their capacity to disseminate, on a grand scale, hate messages were added. As well a problematic section, which everybody agrees is problematic, was added to include, among the remedies under the Canadian Human Rights Act, the possibility of imposing a financial penalty of up to \$5,000. That is what we have at the moment.

The question is whether this is consistent with freedom of expression. The Supreme Court of Canada in the Taylor case, an earlier version of section 13, has made clear it is. However, equally important is a second directly related question of whether or not the regulation of mass or repeated hate dissemination is required or at least strongly encouraged by the right to non-discrimination or by the human rights values of equality and dignity that underlie the charter and international human rights law. In that respect, we would do well to remind ourselves of a passage from Chief Justice Dickson, as he then was before leaving the court, in the Taylor case, where he said, in part:

—messages of hate propaganda undermine the dignity and self-worth of target group members and, more generally, contribute to disharmonious relations among various racial, cultural and religious groups, as a result eroding the tolerance and open-mindedness that must flourish in a multicultural society which is committed to the idea of equality.

I was also struck by the testimony of Mr. Mark Freiman, the just-past president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, who appeared before our committee. Among a number of insights that I commend to all colleagues to have a look at, if this issue goes forward after the vote, in terms of what we would do with respect to civil remedies, his testimony is extremely valuable. One of the things he said:

It is my view that subsection 13(1) of the Canadian Human Rights Act is an important resource in protecting vulnerable communities from the harm caused by hate propaganda.

He went on to say:

Is hate speech dangerous? To ask the question is to answer it. History provides the clearest examples of the mortal dangers—that is, dangerous to life—that hate speech can carry. Study Nazi propaganda in the thirties. Study Cambodian propaganda in the seventies. Study anti-Tutsi propaganda in Rwanda in the nineties. Study racist propaganda in the former Yugoslavia in the nineties. You will get your answer.

Therefore, it is really important that we keep in mind that kind of backdrop as to why section 13 was there in the first place and what would be lost in the process of repealing it.

My colleague who has sponsored the bill has been arguing, and has been arguing with a great deal of passion and consistency from his point of view, that the Criminal Code, especially section 319, is all that we need. It is partly where it should be for various reasons and by implication he seems to be suggesting it is effective. Although in committee he did acknowledge that he rather hoped that something might be done with section 319 to make it more effective.

However, before going on that route of accepting that repeal of section 13, the civil remedy side under the Canadian Human Rights Act can be replaced solely by a Criminal Code provision, we should again remind ourselves of the words of Chief Justice Dickson in Taylor.

● (1835)

He said:

It is essential...to recognize that, as an instrument especially designed to prevent the spread of prejudice and to foster tolerance and equality in the community, the Canadian Human Rights Act is very different from the Criminal Code. The aim of human rights legislation, and of s. 13(1), is not to bring the full force of the state's power against a blameworthy individual for the purpose of imposing punishment. Instead, provisions found in human rights statutes generally operate in a less confrontational manner, allowing for a conciliatory settlement if possible and, where discrimination exists, gearing remedial responses more towards compensating the victim.

I will not argue with a lot of the evidence to suggest that may indeed not be how section 13 has been functioning under the Canadian Human Rights Act. I do agree that there have been procedural abuses to the point that many seem to be willing to give up on section 13. However, as my colleague, the justice critic, said on numerous occasions in the committee, we should not be throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Therefore, I, and I hope most of my colleagues, will be opposing this private member's bill, but I recognize that it is likely to pass. Therefore, I think it is extremely important that we keep the record of witnesses firmly in mind for purposes of going forward.

If the bill does pass, we all should be open to some kind of revisiting of this issue to build back up the appropriate protections within the Canadian Human Rights Act or possibly be open to some other civil remedy at the federal level with respect to the telecommunications issues that section 13(1) deals with. Given that there is a one-year delay in the private member's bill before us, we could have some time and some space for that kind of approach, especially if the government were to co-operate. I would personally be very happy to commit resources and time to working in a multi-party way and treating seriously the kinds of suggestions we heard in the committee and the other suggestions that we know must also be out there to make a new federal civil remedy work.

In this respect, it is really important to note that no witness before us, not a single witness, referred to the content of section 13 itself or decisions made by tribunals under section 13 as being the problem. All were supportive of the fact that the actual phraseology and what the tribunals had done with it, almost always limiting themselves to extreme cases of hatred, was fine. However, everybody focused on different versions of a set of procedural problems that had led to abuse, which people felt was very real.

We are in the situation, I believe, of being about to repeal something without anything adequate to replace it. Frankly, the Criminal Code provision, section 319, is not adequate. We heard that in committee. We know that from a bunch of studies. It is not doing the job. Very little is prosecuted under it for a variety of reasons. Basically, the result is we will have a repeal of a civil remedy and a completely inadequate criminal replacement.

Private Members' Business

It is important to reiterate the point made by one of the witnesses from B'nai Brith, Mr. Kurz, legal counsel, who in one of our sessions was probably the most convinced that this was a fait accompli, that it would go ahead. Therefore, he saw no mileage in trying to have a more complex amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act through the sponsor with the assistance of the government. However, he did want to emphasize that every section 13 decision was “unassailable” from his point of view. That is really important because some of the questions being asked from within the committee, and I think some of the tenor of my hon. colleague's presentation here tonight, suggests that the real problem is section 13 itself and how it unduly infringes on freedom of expression, which frankly I feel is the incorrect argument. I think it is the procedural and institutional flaws in how section 13 has been enforced that is the problem and that needs to be what we seek to rectify after this bill passes.

We would also do well to recall and heed the words of Mr. David Matas, who also appeared on behalf of B'nai Brith, when he said:

My view is that in order to combat hate speech effectively, you need a range of remedies. The first is simply education and advocacy and information. The notion that it has to be either the Criminal Code or nothing I think gets us to a situation where nothing ends up being done, because the Criminal Code is too draconian.

It is not simply the fact that the Criminal Code may be ineffective for what it is intended to be, but that it may not go to the heart of the kinds of reasons we have human rights codes in the first place.

● (1840)

I would like to end by saying that there was quite a bit of goodwill toward the last part of the committee sessions about looking forward to possibly rebuilding a civil remedy. Almost all of the witnesses from B'nai Brith and Mr. Freiman spoke in those terms. I know the government is focusing mostly on possible changes to the Criminal Code, but I think we have to keep open the possibility of a new civil remedy.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are here tonight to debate Bill C-304, a bill which, if passed, would repeal section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, thereby eliminating civil remedies for protection against hate speech in this country, particularly as regarding the exploding and assaultive hate speech and incitement on the Internet, of which insufficient reference—understandably given the limitations of time—has been made at these debates.

I do not wish to reiterate that which I have elaborated upon previously in the House and in committee. Suffice it to say that I believe that this initiative, while well-intentioned, is nonetheless ill-considered, uninformed and a prejudicial move in the wrong direction. Simply put, without effective recourse against hate and group-vilifying speech, we are both ignoring and betraying the lessons of history regarding the dangers of assaultive speech. The arguments of some in this place in support of a repeal, frankly, have made a mockery of our constitutional law, arguments regarding free speech and, indeed, the related jurisprudence, in particular Supreme Court jurisprudence.

I note that this debate takes place at an interesting confluence of events. It is the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, when we celebrate a doctrine that rightly enshrines freedom of expression. The mover of the bill rightly characterized it

as a cornerstone of democracy, but the Supreme Court has held, and this is the important point, that it is not an absolute right, although very often the mover has spoken of it as if it were.

It is one where the freedom of expression has to be read in the light of and in relation to section 1 of the charter and the limitations on hate speech and, as the Supreme Court put it, that are demonstrably justified to promote and protect equality, and that is the purpose of this civil remedy: to guard against violations of section 27 and assaults on our multicultural heritage; to implement our international legal obligations where racist hate speech is held to be outside the ambit of protected speech; most important, and this has been missing entirely from the member's appreciation and those supporting the bill, to guard against assaults upon the very values underlying free speech itself, as the Supreme Court has put it, the search for truth, individual autonomy, equality and democratic participation.

We are also in the aftermath of the month of April, which T. S. Eliot famously described as “the cruellest month”. Indeed, we marked in April the anniversaries of the Rwandan genocide, Yom ha-Shoah, Holocaust Memorial Day, as well as the anniversaries of the Armenian genocide and the Srebrenica massacre, all of which began in April. In the United States and other jurisdictions, April has been designated as a genocide awareness and prevention month.

Indeed, the Supreme Court of Canada has itself recognized the dangers of hate speech in the three causes célèbres of the Supreme Court in the Keegstra case, the Smith and Andrews case and the Taylor case, all of which spoke of the danger that this hate speech can take us down the road to such atrocities, reminding us that the Supreme Court recognized that the Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers; it began with words. As the court put it, “These are the catastrophic effects of racism. These are the chilling facts of history”.

Moreover, B'nai Brith's 2011 “Audit of Antisemitic Incidents” concluded that in the last 10 years there has been an almost threefold increase in reported hate-related incidents in Canada since 2002. I raise this because, as history has taught us only too well, while it may begin with Jews, it does not end with Jews. Anti-Semitism is the canary in the mine shaft of evil which can threaten us all, and so does assaultive speech against vulnerable and targeted minorities, whoever these identifiable groups may be.

While the government insists that these are so-called victimless crimes, the truth is, the courts have found in their harms-based rationale for upholding the constitutionality of such legislation, and indeed, that includes the Cohen commission. The mover spoke as if the Cohen commission did not support this civil remedy. I want to put it on the record that the Cohen commission did support this civil remedy, as it did support the criminal remedy, but realized that these are different remedies by the way in which we address and redress the fundamental threat of assaultive speech, that there is pain and suffering, discrimination and exclusion among those vulnerable communities who are so targeted.

•(1845)

Accordingly, if we are not vigilant in guarding against such assaultive and group-vilifying speech, words can become actions and these actions may themselves have harmful, if not deadly, consequences.

It has been suggested in this debate that somehow free speech is an absolute right or that it ought to be.

I would remind colleagues that even in the United States, the home of the First Amendment doctrine, there are prohibitions against perjury, to protect the right to a fair trial; prohibitions against treasonable speech, to protect national security; prohibitions against pornography, to protect the human dignity of women and children; prohibitions respecting libellous and defamatory speech, to protect privacy and reputation; prohibitions against misleading advertising, to protect consumers. I could go on.

Know that those who have moved this appreciate that in supporting the criminal law remedy they are themselves acknowledging that free speech is not an absolute right.

Therefore, what we are arguing about is not the issue of protecting free speech. We all agree about the protection of free speech. We all agree that it is the cornerstone of democracy. The question is: How do we counteract assaultive hate speech? The criminal law remedy is one remedy, but the civil remedy, a 35-year-old remedy, is yet another.

Simply put, the provisions against hate speech partake in this genre of limitations to protect the rights of individuals and minorities against group-vilifying speech and to protect against inequality, and here the civil remedy comes in, resulting from the discriminatory hate practices that reduce the standing and status of targeted individuals and groups in society and indeed to protect, as I mentioned, not only the very values underlying free speech but the very values, as the Supreme Court put it, that constitute a free and democratic society such as Canada.

Some listening may wonder why the Criminal Code provision is not enough. Simply put, a criminal remedy is not a one-size-fits-all option. It is, in fact, a remedy that should be used restrictively and sparingly. In fact, it is only sparingly invoked.

Most important, in addition to the fact that it should be used sparingly, the problem is that it does not allow for alternative, creative or adaptive remedies, such as those requiring education, outreach or engaging with those affected, what I would call a restorative justice approach to combating hate speech, unlike the criminal law remedy, which characterizes it as a crime against the state but where the civil remedy can characterize it as a demonstrable harm to the targeted community as a discriminatory practice, as an equality rights issue, and that which can only be addressed within the framework of a civil remedy.

None of this is intended to suggest that section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act is ideal, appropriate or effective in its present form. Indeed, I and others have identified numerous flaws with it and have made suggestions for its improvement, including amendments I tabled at committee.

Private Members' Business

However, the issue is that the government refuses to even consider any reform or amendment. Indeed, it asserts that repeal is the only option, ignoring why the section was enacted to begin with, why it is still necessary today and in what ways it might be reformed and improved through principled amendment.

I will outline just a few such options. We could exclude frivolous claims by requiring the consent of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada before proceeding, not unlike what we do with the criminal law remedy at this time. We could restrict actions so as to allow the commission to dismiss matters that are before it and another tribunal so as to prevent SLAPPs and vexatious efforts, including those of persons who presently, regrettably, under the present law, file the same claim in multiple jurisdictions. We could establish different rules of procedure and evidentiary considerations for the commission to address the concerns that the member who has moved the bill has properly raised. We could change costs and allow for certain types of orders to be mandated. We could appreciate the important role of section 13 in the Internet age.

Indeed, there are a panoply of options on the table, but the government flat out refuses to consider any of them.

I want to be clear why I am using the word “government”, as I move to a close, when debating what has been presented as a private member's bill.

It is clear that this has been a government initiative, an element of the party platform as affirmed last June. Government members voted as a block always in committee. They refused to engage on the issue as a whole and refused to accept any amendments.

Indeed, I have to ask why the government advanced this as a private member's bill and not as a government bill. Perhaps it had certain misgivings about gauging this in the matter of public opinion and the like, arguably something it attempted it in relation to Motion No. 312, while also limiting discussion and debate throughout the introduction of this initiative as a private member's bill.

•(1850)

Simply put, the government is, to use the somewhat cliched expression used by my colleague, throwing the baby out, regrettably, with the bathwater. There are many principled reforms that could be made to section 13. Hate speech and incitement are increasing problems in Canada, particularly on the Internet, as a series of scholarly studies remind us, and we must ensure that there are both civil and criminal recourses at our disposal to address and redress these wrongs, as Mr. Matas and Mr. Freiman set forth in committee.

I will conclude by saying that, at the end of the day, the criminal law remedy is in place. It should and is only used sparingly. The civil law remedy is necessary for the protection of all the other values: equality, non-discrimination, protection against targeted minorities and the like. That is how we should go forward—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Private Members' Business

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the private member's bill introduced by the member Westlock—St. Paul. I am humbled that the member would ask me to speak to his bill. It is not often that one gets a chance to speak to a private member's bill because of the procedural rules, so that the member would express his confidence in my views in allowing me to speak to his bill is humbling and an honour. I thank him for that. It means a lot to me that he would ask me to do that.

Section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms says that everyone in Canada has the fundamental freedom of expression. However, this freedom, while fundamental, is not absolute, as the member for Mount Royal has said, because in section 1 of the charter it states:

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

That is an important context in which to place this debate.

Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act is an unreasonable limit in a free and democratic society on this fundamental freedom of expression. I believe there are three reasons that it is an unreasonable limit. First, section 13 is too vague. Second, section 13 subjects this fundamental freedom guaranteed in the charter to a quasi-judicial process. Third, section 13, in my view, is an overly expansive interpretation of the harm principle.

I will elaborate on the three reasons that section 13 should be struck from the Canadian Human Rights Act. First, section 13 is too big. The wording of section 13, such as the terms “hatred” and “contempt”, is not clearly defined in the act. I think this opens up section 13 to the possibility of an overly expansive interpretation that would unreasonably limit free expression.

The second reason that I think section 13 should be struck is that by placing a limit on free expression in the Canadian Human Rights Act in such a vague manner, we are subjecting this fundamental freedom enshrined in the Canadian charter to a quasi-judicial process. In my view, a quasi-judicial process such as this, with its vagueness, is too informal a place to arbitrate such a fundamental freedom. These fundamental freedoms guaranteed in the charter should be arbitrated in the courts with their checks and balances assuring an appropriate level of protection for these cherished freedoms.

The third reason I think section 13 should be struck is that it has an unreasonable limit on free expression in that it rests on an overly expansive interpretation of the harm principle. I acknowledge that there is no absolute right to free expression. That is why we have Criminal Code provisions, for example, on yelling “fire” in a theatre, on uttering a bomb threat in an airport, on perjuring oneself in a court of law and on libelling another in the public sphere.

Why do we have these limits on free expression in these four instances and many others? It is because they would harm others. Yelling “fire” in a crowded theatre of a thousand people could cause a stampede and could create deaths on the way out of people who are trampled underfoot. Uttering a bomb threat in an airport or on an airplane could put the lives of passengers and travellers at risk.

Libelling another in the public sphere is also a reasonable limit on free expression. Perjuring oneself in a court of law, obviously, is a reasonable limit. Restrictions on perjury is a reasonable limit on free expression. Obviously we need people to speak the truth in court because we need to establish the facts.

These are reasonable limits on free expression. However, section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, which prevents someone from expressing something that is likely to expose a person or a group of persons to contempt or hatred is, I believe, an overly expansive interpretation of this harm principle.

I am not alone in my concerns about this section of the act. Many others have voiced concerns about section 13 and this bill addresses those very concerns.

● (1855)

For example, in 2008, the Canadian Human Rights Commission commissioned Professor Richard Moon to conduct an independent analysis of section 13. In his report he recommended that section 13 be repealed.

A year later the Canadian Human Rights Commission itself undertook an investigation. In its report of 2009 it found problems with section 13 of the act in that it was inconsistent with the charter.

Former Liberal MP Keith Martin voiced concerns about section 13. In 2008 he tabled Motion No. 446 to repeal section 13(1).

Organizations such as the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Association of Journalists have also voiced concerns about this section, as have articles that have appeared in papers such as the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post*.

When we reach further back into the intellectual traditions that underpin our North American democracies both here in Canada and south of the border, we find that people like John Stuart Mill voiced concerns about unreasonable limits on free speech. In his famous book *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill argued that free discourse is a necessary condition for progress. I think he would have argued that section 13 is an overly expansive interpretation of his harm principle.

I would like to quote what Mill said about how important it is not to unreasonably limit free expression:

[T]he peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

Free speech and free expression are fundamental to a free and democratic society. This is a reasonable bill that would remove an unreasonable limit on free expression. It is not by force but by free speech that we will counter hatred and prejudice. That is why this bill is so very important.

The bill would strengthen the fundamental foundation of a free and democratic society, the fundamental foundation of Canadian society, namely, freedom of expression. I urge all members in the House to support it.

Private Members' Business

•(1900)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise again to speak about Bill C-304, which Kathleen Mahoney, a professor in the Faculty of Law of the University of Calgary and a member of the Royal Society of Canada, called a bill on the freedom of hateful expression.

We need clarification, because to associate this bill solely with freedom of expression is to forget what is protected by section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act. It is sometimes good to remind ourselves of this, and I like to do so.

It must be the lawyer in me that likes to refer specifically to acts and bills. When I examine and analyze legislation, I always go over it with a fine tooth comb, and with an open mind, which is what my colleague from Westlock—St. Paul asked members of this House to do as they consider his bill.

At first glance, everyone who reads the bill tends to agree with it because it amends the Canadian Human Rights Act in order to protect certain freedoms, including the freedom of expression.

However, once again, the devil is in the details and in the drafting of the bill. We came across several problems during our in-depth consideration of the bill in committee. The witnesses drew attention to a number of problems. I think my colleagues from Mont-Royal and Toronto—Danforth did a good job of highlighting the problems. Nobody said they disagreed with the protection against hate speech because that is what section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act is trying to prevent. I do not think that anyone in this House is against this, even on the government side. Ultimately, their responses to our concerns always brought us back to the Criminal Code, specifically to section 319, which already provides for criminal charges against anyone engaged in this kind of behaviour.

Section 13 was not a major problem in the opinion of the witnesses, which really struck me, and, to use the words of the previous member, the section was not too vague. No witness said that it was. One only need read the jurisprudence developed by both the Supreme Court and the Human Rights Tribunal. Nobody came and told us that the decisions were inadequate or that people who had not engaged in hate speech had been found guilty under Canadian law.

What people invariably told us, which made them feel like giving up when it came to solving the section 13 problem, is that it required time and was very costly. They added that if somebody were to file an obviously futile, frivolous or completely ridiculous complaint, that there would be no tools in the legislation to enable the commission to dispose of the case swiftly.

According to those who specialize in defending people charged with uttering hate speech or encouraging this kind of speech as defined in section 13, the process can take five or six years and huge amounts of money.

I explained to the committee that I thought we were throwing out the baby with the bath water. That often happens with bills, whether they are government or private members' bills. To avoid one type of problem, the section is deleted in its entirety. That creates an

enormous hole. I asked the member about that and the Green Party member asked the very same question. To date we have not had a response. This bill would repeal section 13, which states:

13. (1) It is a discriminatory practice for a person or a group of persons acting in concert to communicate telephonically or to cause to be so communicated, repeatedly, in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a telecommunication undertaking within the legislative authority of Parliament, any matter that is likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact that that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination.

•(1905)

Section 3 reads as follows:

For all purposes of this Act, the prohibited grounds of discrimination are race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.

I repeat: it clearly mentions sex.

Let us now look at the Criminal Code, since the defence of the government and the Conservative Party at every stage has been based on the Criminal Code. Section 319 of the Criminal Code pertains to public incitement of hatred. I will not get into all of its shortcomings. It is not clear how crimes are prosecuted under section 319. What is worse, the identifiable groups are only those distinguished by colour, race, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. What about cases involving hate speech based on sex, on gender? They are not mentioned at all.

One element of protection for women has just been taken away—one that was essential because of how difficult it is to enforce a section of the Canadian Human Rights Act. I find that totally unacceptable. In committee, we made some progress with the Conservatives, but not enough for them to listen to reason, to decide to wait before passing this bill or to decide to address the bill's shortcomings before continuing the debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all colleagues who participated in this vigorous debate. I would also like to mention that I have tried very hard to avoid any kind of partisanship in this debate because this is something that has reverberated in all political parties across the country, certainly from the grassroots. I feel it is important to reply to some of the debate today.

My Liberal colleague is a valued member of the House and is often seen as above partisanship and reproach. However, the fact of the matter is his debate is stuck in the time of 10 years ago or four years ago. The amendments he brought forward were brought forward four or five years ago. He is more than happy for them to stay there because he likes section 13 the way it is now.

Adjournment Proceedings

He talked about partisanship and how it is a government bill. While I would like to thank the grassroots members of the Conservative Party who identified this as an issue years ago, this is not a government bill. This is a bill that was brought forward by me. It is a bill that is supported by B'nai Brith, the Muslim Canadian Congress, PEN Canada, the Toronto *Star*, Egale Canada, the *National Post*, and I could go on, as my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills did. The fact of the matter is these are organizations that absolutely span the political spectrum. These are not about one political point or another. In fact, my hon. colleague should look to his own caucus. It was a Liberal member of Parliament who brought this forward in 2008. It is a Liberal member of Parliament who is still supporting and voting for it, and I thank him for that.

When it comes to members of the official opposition, they raised some excellent points. The Minister of Justice has already put forward amendments to the Criminal Code that would ensure there are no gaps when it comes to the protection of minority rights in this country. Hate speech is a serious crime. It is something that real police officers should be investigating, with real lawyers and judges presiding over these cases, not a quasi-judicial body in a backroom doing things in the dark, which nobody ever gets to see. That is not justice.

The NDP has been putting forward a two-tiered approach to hate speech. I do not fundamentally understand how a party such as the NDP could support a two-tiered approach to hate speech, equivocally saying that some forms of inciting hatred and harm against identifiable groups are worse than other forms of inciting hatred and harm. My belief is that it is a serious crime and we need to address it.

I will close by saying that freedom is too precious to our society to entrust to the bureaucracy to enforce a vague, over-reaching act inhibiting our freedom. Freedom is our most precious gift that we can pass on to our children and the next generation of Canadians.

• (1910)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 7:12 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 6, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*Translation*]

RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Ms. Hélène Lavergère (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I would like to follow up on a question that I asked in the House on February 28 when I inquired whether the minister was aware, prior to the tragic death of Rémy Beauregard, of the serious crisis within Rights and Democracy.

Unfortunately, the minister's answer at the time was not quite satisfactory, to say the least. Nothing about recent management of Rights and Democracy was anywhere near satisfactory. It was actually quite troubling.

Rights and Democracy was created in 1988 by an act of Parliament that received unanimous approval. The non-partisan organization intervened in troubled regions to promote respect for human rights and further democracy. Rights & Democracy was respected by the international community. It was achieving its goals and working well.

Now, our Prime Minister's government has taken this non-partisan organization that ran smoothly and made it into a partisan organization that runs poorly. The Conservatives have poisoned the organization. Not happy with just poisoning it, we were told on April 2 that the government had decided to go a little further and to shut down Rights and Democracy. What reason did they give for shutting down the institution? According to the minister, it is because the institution had problems. Unfortunately, the institution's problems were the ones that the government had created. As they say, if you want to hang your dog, first give him a bad name.

Rights and Democracy had its head office in my riding. The agency's employees learned they were out of a job when the minister sent out his press release. The minister did nothing to thank them for their excellent work and the services they provided for more than 20 years. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to do so. I would like to thank them for their work. It is time to recognize the positive contribution made by the people who ran the agency, people who deserved better treatment than they got from the government.

Finally, I would like to say that I think it is worrisome that, just at a time when Canada should be providing assistance to emerging democracies, the government has closed down a centre that was in the best position to do exactly that.

I have a number of questions that I would like to ask the government today about Rights and Democracy, but I will limit myself to three. Was it always the government's intention to close the centre? Why close the agency instead of just removing the troublemakers from the board of directors and appointing qualified people to run it? Finally, coming back to my first question, when will a member of the government have the courage to speak up and apologize to the family of Rémy Beaugard?

• (1915)

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, the world has witnessed some remarkable changes in democracy in the last two years. Nobody would have predicted the exceptional circumstances that took place in many countries, including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Burma. Who would have thought that the foreign minister would this year be able to talk freely with the General Secretary of the Burmese National League for Democracy, Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Canadian government is actively supporting these and other remarkable democratization movements, but we are doing it in an environment that is quite different than what it was when Rights and Democracy was established in 1988.

On April 3, it was announced that the Government of Canada would be including Rights and Democracy as part of its efforts to find cost efficiencies and savings. Given the challenges of Rights and Democracy, which have been known to all for some time, it was decided it was time to put the organization's past challenges behind us and move forward.

On April 5, the government announced the appointment of a number of senior government officials to the organization's interim board of directors in order to oversee the organization's closure. Under the interim board's direction, Rights and Democracy is developing a plan to guide the timely, orderly termination of its programming abroad while seeking to minimize the impact on the ground.

This decision does not change the commitment of the Government of Canada to promote not only democracy, but also freedom, human rights, and the rule of law around the world.

I should mention that from Canada's ambassadors and embassy personnel around the world to our staff at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian International Development Agency in Ottawa, Government of Canada officials work hard every day to support democracy and human rights internationally.

In 2010-11, the Department of Foreign Affairs spent \$21 million to advance democracy around the world. DFAIT's democracy support is complemented by a much larger envelope for long-term good governance, human rights and the rule of law. This support, managed by the Canadian International Development Agency, totalled over \$204 million for the year 2010-11.

Given the challenges that Rights and Democracy faced and the new conditions that we are working under today, it is clearly time to move forward. The government is now looking at different tools that exist today so that, drawing on Canadian experience, we can

Adjournment Proceedings

effectively support those remarkable and courageous people around the world who are working to claim their basic democratic rights.

To add a personal touch to this, I was on the foreign affairs committee when the issue of Rights and Democracy was brought in front of the committee, and we spent numerous hours listening to testimony.

First of all, to answer the member's question, the government had no intention of closing Rights and Democracy at that given time. However, as things have evolved now and as I have stated in my intervention, it is cost-cutting measures and efficiencies that we are seeking, and with the problems that have occurred, we felt this was the best course of action to take.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Madam Speaker, I would like to point out again that the problems of Rights & Democracy were created by this government.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs tells us that diplomatic staff do the work of promoting democracy. Of course they do. That is not new; it has always been the case. In the past, the staff did this work, staff who, because of the cuts, will be fewer and therefore able to do less of this work.

In addition to the work of diplomats, this specialized institution had the necessary expertise and could do work that the government was unable to do. It could work in extremely difficult areas. We have lost an additional and important asset; Rights and Democracy was an organization that was on the forward edge of promoting democracy. We have lost it at a critical time in modern history.

[English]

The parliamentary secretary is talking of moving forward. I see it as moving backward.

• (1920)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, that is her opinion, but I can say very clearly that this government has made a decision taking everything into account.

As I pointed out to the hon. member, I was on the committee for foreign affairs when we did a thorough study of Rights and Democracy. However, as I have stated, things have changed. There has been a tremendous movement toward democracy around the world, and therefore the Government of Canada, having the commitment to promote democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law internationally, will continue to work in close coordination with partners around the world to further these objectives.

The decision has been made to close Rights and Democracy, but that does not mean no promotion of democracies around the world.

[Translation]

PARKS CANADA

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, something truly frightening is happening within Parks Canada, which is also responsible for many historic sites.

Adjournment Proceedings

We have heard about the government's decision to eliminate nearly 1,700 jobs at Parks Canada. As a result of this decision, across Canada and especially in Quebec—where 300 positions are being eliminated—there will be an irreversible loss of fundamental expertise in the understanding of our past.

Archeologists, historians, conservators, interpretive guides, specialists in the understanding of our past—from New France to the Forillon expropriation. Some will see their jobs disappear, while others will have their ability to do their jobs seriously undermined.

As pointed out by the archeology professors of the Université Laval in an open letter:

The Government of Canada—as the owner of this research and conservation infrastructure and these historic sites that play a central role in our Canadian identity—must assume its responsibilities. It must not limit itself to merely the static management of these sites, but it must renew their heritage content by documenting them, studying them and animating them, based on new knowledge so that Canadians can become more familiar with them.

The Association des archéologues du Québec shares those sentiments:

Following a Canadian government accounting procedure based, in our opinion, on a narrow interpretation of what heritage represents, Parks Canada conducted a self-mutilation exercise that is having a profound impact on the qualified and dedicated staff... This is an attack against Quebec's identity. We can only empathize with them over the inhumanity of these cuts.

This makes me think of the people who were forced out of Forillon when Forillon Park was created in 1970, who had to leave their homes and their villages to make room for a national park. This park, leased to the federal government for 99 years, was still full of items belonging to the former residents, objects that have been kept in Quebec for the most part. The Conservative government is now adding insult to injury by taking these objects and sending them to storage in Ottawa despite the fact Gaspé Peninsula residents had asked that the objects be transferred to the Musée de la Gaspésie, which already has an exhibit on the Forillon expropriation.

Again, according to the archeologists:

When the time comes, we will be there to remind elected officials of this dogmatic management based on a clear lack of knowledge and vision. Parks Canada made an unexplainable decision to centralize all the collections in the Ottawa area, including those kept at the Service de la Gare maritime in Quebec City... Faced with the real possibility of a confrontation with the Government of Quebec, the [federal] government has backed down to some extent and is now saying that the collections of artifacts and items of ethno-historical significance will not leave Quebec and will be stored on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River.

This clarification may have somewhat defused the possibility of a conflict between Quebec and Ottawa, but this situation remains a terrible injustice for the regions of Quebec, particularly Quebec City, which is being stripped of its own material culture. Is it normal for researchers who are interested in collections of precious pieces of world heritage to have to travel over 400 kilometres to consult or study them?

Well, Madam Speaker, allow me to respond to the Association des archéologues du Québec. No. It is not normal. The federal government is stealing Quebec's historical artifacts. The CBC even reported that the government was trying to sell artifacts to collectors and private museums. It is outrageous.

Back home in the Gaspé, the Musée de la Gaspésie called for the repatriation of artifacts to do with the expropriation of Forillon. The Quebec government, which has other fish to fry—as we all know—

was concerned about this decision and requested a meeting with the minister. Here are my questions for the minister.

Did the minister intend to meet with Quebec's Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women? Can he commit to keeping the artifacts in their current location, surrounded by the appropriate experts? Will the government entertain the request by the Musée de la Gaspésie and leave the Forillon artifacts in a place that suits the people of the Gaspé? Finally, when does he intend to stop attacking Quebec's history?

• (1925)

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to address this important question for the first time in the House.

The member spoke about the identity of Quebec being tied into its natural heritage and parks. I agree with him. It has been my pleasure to visit many national parks. I believe that the natural heritage that is maintained through Parks Canada binds us together as Canadians. I would like to take the opportunity to correct the record on the location of some of the artifacts that he talked about and perhaps alleviate some of his concerns.

The collection currently located in Quebec City will remain in Quebec. The portion of the national collection that is housed in Quebec City, which includes artifacts originating from Quebec, as well as objects from Forillon National Park, will remain in the province of Quebec. As part of our government's efforts to reduce the deficit, Parks Canada is consolidating its national collection and conservation laboratories in the National Capital Region. The part of the national collection currently located in Quebec City will remain in the province of Quebec in a facility to be determined. This is part of Parks Canada's overall effort to consolidate into one reduced structure, which will streamline services and improve internal efficiencies to reduce costs.

Overall, there are 44 positions. My colleague spoke of the number of staff. I want to reassure him that there are 44 positions that will take care of, manage and restore the collections of Parks Canada: 15 people will work in the collections and curatorial section and 29 people in the restoration section. Scientific, professional and technical services, including archeological and artifact restoration expertise, will continue to be provided by Parks Canada and through partnerships with other organizations. Professional capacity will remain. In addition, there will be no change with respect to the display or use of the valuable collection by national historic sites in Quebec.

I would like to remind the member for the riding of Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia that Parks Canada is not permanently closing any national parks or national historic sites. Our government is acting responsibly by improving the efficiency of our operations and ensuring Parks Canada can continue to focus and deliver its core mandate to protect and present our national treasured and protected places.

I had some representatives from Parks Canada come to my riding last week. I am very blessed to live just about an hour away from Banff National Park, the first national park in Canada. I was really pleased to see the amount of work that the park staff are doing to ensure that visitors to our national parks have a great experience, certainly this summer as we are about to ramp up.

I share my colleague's concern. I loved his comment that our national parks are core to our national identity. Our government is committed to ensuring that the visitor experience and the ecological function of Parks Canada are maintained, but also that we are also being wise stewards of taxpayer funding. We feel that we have that balance right.

● (1930)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-François Fortin: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment responsible for Parks Canada for her answer.

Despite her answer, however, I still have a number of concerns about the conservation of Quebec's artifacts. It is important to understand that the most common approach in archaeological circles is to keep artifacts as close to their place of discovery or of origin as possible. Keeping collections from Quebec or Forillon in a warehouse in Gatineau will not make these relics of our history and our past more accessible to the community.

Adjournment Proceedings

I would like the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment to think about whether it is appropriate to house this collection in places that are not accessible, when the collection is important to the history of Quebec. The minister should respond to the request made by the Musée de la Gaspésie to repatriate these artifacts from the Gaspé to their place of origin, in Forillon.

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, our government values the relationship it has with the province and the people of Quebec. We appreciate the importance that the objects in Parks Canada's collection hold for local residents, particularly in the case of artifacts from Forillon National Park. To that effect, I would like to announce that our government is ready to work with local officials in exploring opportunities to transfer objects from Forillon National Park of cultural importance to the Gaspé region back to the communities. Parks Canada remains committed to working with local residents in a respectful manner on this sensitive issue and looks forward to exploring additional opportunities to work together, as do I with my colleague.

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

(The House adjourned at 7:32 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, May 30, 2012

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Holocaust			
Mr. Goldring	8557	Ms. Finley	8561
Bring Back the Salmon		Ms. Turmel	8561
Mr. Alexander	8557	Ms. Finley	8561
Patriotes de Longueuil 1999 Soccer Team		Mr. Rae	8562
Mr. Nantel	8557	Mr. Harper	8562
Royal Canadian Air Cadets		Mr. Rae	8562
Mr. Shipley	8558	Mr. Harper	8562
Africa Day		Mr. Cleary	8562
Mr. Bélanger	8558	Ms. Finley	8562
Birkdale Art in the Park		Ms. Ashton	8562
Ms. James	8558	Ms. Ashton	8563
Veterans Affairs		Ms. Finley	8563
Mr. Stoffer	8558	Mr. Lapointe	8563
National Anaphylaxis Month		Ms. Finley	8563
Mr. Dechert	8558	Fisheries and Oceans	
Penn Torah		Mr. Chisholm	8563
Ms. Bateman	8559	Mr. Ashfield	8563
Laure Frappier and Raymond Poisson		Mr. Chisholm	8563
Mrs. Hassainia	8559	Mr. Ashfield	8564
Restoring Rail Service Legislation		The Environment	
Mr. Lizon	8559	Ms. Quach	8564
Aboriginal Affairs		Mr. Kent	8564
Ms. Ashton	8559	Ms. Quach	8564
New Democratic Party of Canada		Mr. Kent	8564
Mr. Gourde	8560	Employment	
City of Markham		Mr. Easter	8564
Mr. McCallum	8560	Ms. Finley	8564
New Democratic Party of Canada		Mr. Brison	8565
Mr. Dykstra	8560	Ms. Finley	8565
Mailing of Human Remains		Co-operatives	
Mr. Garrison	8560	Mr. Bélanger	8565
Restoring Rail Service Legislation		Mr. Paradis	8565
Mr. Calandra	8560	Natural Resources	
		Ms. Crowder	8565
		Mr. Oliver	8565
		Aboriginal Affairs	
		Mr. Genest-Jourdain	8565
		Mr. Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	8565
		Search and Rescue	
		Mr. Donnelly	8565
		Mr. Ashfield	8566
		Mr. Donnelly	8566
		Mr. Ashfield	8566
		Rail Transportation	
		Mr. Breitreuz	8566

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Environment

Mr. Cullen	8561
Mr. Harper	8561
Mr. Cullen	8561
Mr. Harper	8561

Employment Insurance

Mr. Cullen	8561
Mr. Harper	8561
Ms. Turmel	8561

Ms. Raitt	8566
Contaminated Water in Shannon	
Ms. Michaud	8566
Mr. Blaney	8566
The Environment	
Mr. Cullen	8566
Mr. Kent	8567
Health	
Mr. Dubé	8567
Mr. Gosal	8567
Mr. Dubé	8567
Mr. Gosal	8567
Fisheries and Oceans	
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	8567
Mr. Ashfield	8567
The Environment	
Mr. Regan	8567
Mr. Ashfield	8567
Employment	
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	8568
Ms. Ambrose	8568
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	8568
Ms. Ambrose	8568
The Economy	
Mr. Albas	8568
Mrs. Shea	8568
Search and Rescue	
Ms. Fry	8568
Mr. Ashfield	8568
Aerospace Industry	
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	8568
Mr. Paradis	8569
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Daniel	8569
Mr. Baird	8569
Border Crossing	
Mr. Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	8569
Mr. Toews	8569
Agriculture and Agri-food	
Mr. Bellavance	8569
Mr. Paradis	8569
Resignation of Member	
Mr. Richardson	8569
Mr. Cullen	8570
Mr. Rae	8570
Mr. Plamondon	8571
Ms. May	8571
Points of Order	
Oral Questions	
Mr. Cullen	8571
Use of an Unparliamentary Expression	
Mr. Patry	8571

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Public Safety	
Mr. Toews	8571
Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lukiwski	8571
Interparliamentary Delegations	
Mr. Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	8571
Committees of the House	
Canadian Heritage	
Mr. Moore (Fundy Royal)	8571
Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Preston	8572
Public Accounts	
Mr. Christopherson	8572
Canada Elections Act	
Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	8572
Bill C-424. Introduction and first reading	8572
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	8572
Citizenship Act	
Mr. Shory	8572
Bill C-425. Introduction and first reading	8572
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	8572
Private Members' Business	
Mr. Van Loan	8572
Motion	8572
(Motion agreed to)	8572
Government of Iran	
Mrs. Ablonczy	8572
Motion	8572
(Motion agreed to)	8573
Petitions	
Katimavik	
Ms. Borg	8573
Protection of Children	
Mr. Anderson	8573
Abortion	
Mr. Anderson	8573
Rights of the Unborn	
Mr. Anderson	8573
Pensions	
Ms. Sgro	8573
International Co-operation	
Mr. Chong	8573
Mr. Bevington	8573
Pensions	
Ms. Foote	8573
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation	
Ms. May	8574
The Environment	
Ms. May	8574
Rights of the Unborn	
Mr. Merrifield	8574

Human Rights	
Ms. Sitsabaiesan	8574
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	8574
Rights of the Unborn	
Mr. Woodworth	8574
Abortion	
Mr. Casey	8574
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Casey	8574
Pensions	
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe	8575
Human Rights	
Mr. Chicoine	8575
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation	
Mr. Simms	8575
Air Canada	
Mr. Lamoureux	8575
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lukiwski	8575
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Lukiwski	8575

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply	
Opposition Motion—Cooperatives	
Mr. Bélanger	8575
Motion	8575
Mr. Hyer	8578
Mr. Chicoine	8578
Ms. St-Denis	8578
Mr. Nantel	8578
Mr. Easter	8579
Mr. Lake	8579
Mr. Bélanger	8581
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	8581
Mr. Easter	8582
Mr. Payne	8582

Ms. May	8582
Mr. Godin	8583
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	8583
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe	8584
Mr. Easter	8584
Mr. Allen (Welland)	8585
Mr. Easter	8586
Mr. Nantel	8586
Ms. St-Denis	8587
(Motion agreed to)	8587

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Groundwater Contamination	
Motion	8588
Motion negated	8589
Canada Pension Plan	
Bill C-326. Second reading	8589
Motion negated	8590
Canadian Human Rights Act	
Mr. Storseth	8590
Bill C-304. Third Reading	8590
Ms. Boivin	8592
Ms. May	8592
Mr. Scott	8592
Mr. Cotler	8594
Mr. Chong	8596
Ms. Boivin	8597
Mr. Storseth	8597
Division on motion deferred	8598

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Rights and Democracy	
Ms. Laverdière	8598
Mr. Obhrai	8599
Parks Canada	
Mr. Fortin	8599
Ms. Rempel	8600

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:

Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

En cas de non-livraison,

retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>