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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, June 11, 2012**  
**(Part A)**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 11, 2012

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

### SEARCH AND RESCUE

The House resumed from April 30 consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand and speak in this debate. Being from Nova Scotia, I can appreciate the importance of having a solid and responsive search and rescue system in Canada. Many Atlantic Canadians have traditionally made their living from the sea, whether fishing or depending on it for our imports and our exports.

While we have a love for the sea, we also have a high degree of respect for the dangers that the sea brings. The sea is responsible for countless incidents every year, and having a search and rescue system that can come to the aid of Canadians during these incidents is crucial.

So far in this debate we have heard about how in Canada search and rescue relies on all levels of government and volunteer organization to work together in the best interests of Canadians. We have heard how the Canadian Forces are just one component of this system, albeit a crucially important one. We also have debated the relative merits of diverting more of our search and rescue resources toward establishing a continuous 24/7 readiness posture for Canadian Forces search and rescue crews of 30 minutes from notification to liftoff.

The government does not support this for the reasons we have already stated in the debate. In rising today, I will add to this debate by highlighting some of the outstanding expertise and capabilities that the Canadian Forces bring to search and rescue in Canada, capabilities that are deployed in more than a thousand search and rescue calls each and every year, capabilities that provide assistance to three or four people in distress each day in this vast and rugged country, including a total of more than 200 people since the beginning of this year alone. This so we might better appreciate the impressive quality of the search and rescue system that we already have in Canada.

Within Canada's search and rescue system, the Canadian Forces have a specific role to play. It operates the joint rescue coordination centres of Victoria, Trenton and Halifax. It monitors distress signals and, along with the Canadian Coast Guard, it coordinates the national response to air and sea incidents. Under search and rescue's mandate, our military also plans and prepares to respond to major air disasters taking place anywhere in Canada.

This means, following a plane crash and immediate search and rescue response should an event be declared a major air disaster, that the Canadian Forces has the responsibility to deploy additional search and rescue technicians and survival equipment and logistics and medical personnel.

The unique specializations and capabilities of the Canadian Forces which it brings to the table allows it to assist when possible with missions within provincial or municipal responsibilities as well. These include medical evacuation or searches for lost persons. The bottom line is that when and where it is needed, the Canadian Forces always do its best to respond whenever and wherever it can.

Such was the case on April 15, 2011, when Canadian Forces crews from Greenwood and Gander flew more than 2,400 kilometres to Baffin Island aboard a CC-130 Hercules and a CH-149 Cormorant to help rescue two hikers, one of whom had fallen into a crevasse and was in need of immediate medical attention.

More recently, on March 27 when the Greenwood search and rescue crews were called on two different incidents over the span of a few hours. First, in support of the province of Nova Scotia, five fishermen were hoisted out of the Great Pubnico Lake after their 14-foot boat capsized. Only a few hours later, three people were hoisted off a disabled sailing vessel off Cape Sable Island to a Cormorant in 11 metre seas. This level of service is clearly outstanding and I believe it deserves the pride and support of all Canadians.

The location of search and rescue bases in CFB Comox, Winnipeg, Trenton, Greenwood and Gander is based on decades of historical data that demonstrate that these areas are central to approximately 90% of search and rescue incidents. Canadian Forces crews can respond with Hercules and Buffalo aircraft that provide them the reach, the endurance and the speed to conduct searches for hours over Canada's vast search and rescue area of responsibility.

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We also have a dedicated fleet of Cormorant and Griffin helicopters that have the versatility and stability required for critical hoisting operations. These air assets are by no means all the Canadian Forces has to offer. When the Canadian Forces respond to a search and rescue incident, every one of its resources on every base on this country is a potentially deployable asset. The Canadian Forces will send its most appropriate capability that can get there the fastest.

Of all of the search and rescue capabilities at the Canadian Forces' disposal, the most valuable and most impressive is the search and rescue technician, better known as the SAR tech. The SAR techs are trained to provide on-site, life-saving medical help and have an impressive range of professional capabilities. They are experts in trauma life support, land and sea survival, Arctic rescue, parachuting, diving, mountain climbing and rappelling. They do not hesitate to put their own lives in danger to save others.

These men and women are professional heroes in Canada and on an average day these SAR techs, along with an aircrew, deploy as many as three or four search and rescue missions. This means that, at this very moment, a crew is likely in the air on its way to provide help to someone in need somewhere in Canada right now.

Perhaps, not surprisingly, their service sometimes comes at a price. Such was the case in October 2011 when two hunters were stranded in a life raft in the Arctic waters off of Igloolik. Three search and rescue technicians parachuted out of a CC-130 Hercules into the freezing waters of Canada's Arctic to help the two semi-conscious men.

Sergeant Janick Gilbert, one of the SAR technicians, lost his life that day responding to that call. Sadly, this is not an isolated event. In the last 25 years, 34 SAR members and volunteers have given their lives in their quest to save others.

The government fully recognizes the inherent risks of the search and rescue profession, just as it does all aspects of military service. For this reason, we are committed to working with members of the Canadian Forces to provide them with whatever tools and support they need to strengthen their search and rescue capabilities so that they can both succeed in their missions and return home to their families safely.

For example, in one of the most challenging areas of the country, the Arctic, we have undertaken a number of initiatives to enhance the reach and responsiveness of the Canadian Forces, such as the repositioning of northern survival caches at several key northern airports and ensuring that search and rescue organizations have access to life-saving equipment and material that can be rapidly air dropped.

In addition, the Department of National Defence also provides training and financial assistance to the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association which is establishing the capabilities of northern commercial operators to help increase the availability of search aircraft in Canada's north.

Perhaps most important, the Canadian Forces is increasing its physical presence and capabilities in the north by conducting training operations.

The Canadian Forces has various domestic roles and is responsible for multiple activities on a daily basis, such as surveillance, search and rescue and readiness training, all of which must be considered when planning the distribution of its assets so that the right mix of capabilities is distributed to optimize its availability for a variety of roles in Canada.

Such was the case just a few weeks ago when the Minister of National Defence announced the deployment of a third Griffon helicopter to 5 Wing Goose Bay. This will increase the operational flexibility of 444 Combat Support Squadron to support secondary roles, such as search and rescue missions.

In conclusion, I believe this debate has made it clear that this government, along with the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, continually strives to provide the best service possible so that Canadians receive the help they need when and where they need it.

While we cannot support this particular motion, I thank the hon. member for bringing this discussion forward and for taking such an active interest in the Canadian Forces and its primary mission, which is protecting the safety of Canadians. I think all members of the House can agree on that.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my very great pleasure to speak to this motion. Many of my colleagues are aware that I am a former member of the military, but I was also a medical assistant in the Canadian Forces. That job has a direct connection with the subject before us.

The reason I wanted to say a few words about this motion is that, in the three elections in which I have campaigned, many people came to talk to me because of my military background and asked me what purpose our armed forces serve. They told me they found it hard to understand what purpose our armed forces actually serve, simply that they went on missions abroad and they did not understand more than that. They added that it seemed to them that the armed forces should focus more on our needs. Often, that was when people started talking about search and rescue.

Search and rescue is really a job that our armed forces do directly, to protect and assist the Canadian public by coming to the rescue of people who are in need. Search and rescue is something that really does focus on our needs. As well, I think search and rescue fits well with the Canada first theme of the Canada first defence strategy. Search and rescue means helping, protecting and serving Canadians first. I think that having very high standards for search and rescue is entirely appropriate and is in line with the strategy and the kind of army that most Canadians want to have, to defend their country and serve them.

I would also like to mention that as a medical assistant in the armed forces it is truly a dream to be able to work in search and rescue someday, because doing that job means performing a real service to society. It means saving lives. I did search and rescue exercises with the Canadian Forces reserves every year. It is something that we took very seriously because we wanted to be ready and able to do it on the day when we had to do it in real life, when someone's life had to be saved. Those training exercises were highly valued by soldiers. Thus, we must understand that search and rescue is important to Canada.

I would like to take the time to read the motion, because it really is an excellent motion. The motion states:

That the House acknowledge that Canada lags behind international search and rescue norms and urge the government to recognize the responsibility of the Canadian Forces for the protection of Canadians, and to take such measures as may be required for Canada to achieve the common international readiness standard of 30 minutes at all times, from tasking to becoming airborne, in response to search and rescue incidents.

I will get back to the motion, but I must say that this is an excellent motion and a number of elements help us better understand the situation.

If we are talking about international norms, the norm of 30 minutes at all times comes from a report produced by Seacom International Inc., which is a company that specializes in emergency preparedness. This company prepared a report for the Standing Committee on National Defence. In this report, Canada was ranked last, behind Australia, Ireland, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States when it comes to search and rescue response times.

I think it is awful that Canada is last given that our country usually aspires to a leadership role in search and rescue.

I think it is essential that we aim higher. First of all, I want to make it clear that, with respect to search and rescue response time, the clock starts ticking when the authorities give the order and ends when the aircraft, boat or vehicle leaves the base to carry out the search and rescue mission. No more than 30 minutes should elapse between tasking and the time people leave the base to carry out the mission. It is important to understand that it can sometimes take a lot of time to transport people.

• (1115)

So, it can take quite a while for the search and rescue mission to reach the person. Sometimes it can take more than two, three or four hours in the air or on the water to reach the person in danger. I want to make that very clear.

I would like to provide a brief overview of the number of responses that search and rescue people will have to carry out. There are three joint rescue coordination centres located in Halifax, Trenton and Victoria. These centres coordinate search and rescue interventions. Every year, they coordinate some 1,100 interventions in response to incidents, rescue more than 20,000 people, and literally save an average of 1,200 lives. It is important to keep those numbers in mind.

Now I would like to talk about the problem that led to this motion. Currently, the Canadian Forces have two different search and rescue response times. During office hours from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., the

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response time is 30 minutes, which is what the motion calls for. However, in the evening and at night, from 4 p.m. to 8 a.m., weekends and statutory holidays, the readiness standard is 120 minutes, or two hours.

Thus, two hours can go by between the time when the order is received and when the plane or boat leaves the base. After that, there is also the time needed to get to the site, which can take up to an additional two hours. This means a really long response time.

Most emergency situations—over 80%—that require a search and rescue response occur outside the hours when a the 30-minute response time is the norm, so it is particularly disturbing to think that, for over 80% of operations, people have to settle for a two-hour timeframe. In practical terms, one of the reasons for this is that, if people are out on the water for the day, either for work or recreational purposes, other people—their families and spouses, for instance—who are waiting for them ashore will not begin to worry until the evening, when their loved one has not returned. That is one reason why so many calls are logged in the evening and at night. Calls are received when people begin to think it is really strange that their loved one has not appeared.

At that time of day, people must wait two hours to contact a person. If we consider the example of someone who calls at 6 p.m., if there is a two-hour wait, the work will have to take place at night, but if the response had begun within 30 minutes, the work could have been done in the daylight. Something is really not working here.

Everyone here agrees that if someone were to call the hospital when their spouse was having a heart attack and they were told that it would be two hours before the ambulance even sets out, that would be considered completely unacceptable, especially if they were told that it normally takes 30 minutes to send an ambulance, but, sorry, since the heart attack happened in the evening after supper, it will take two hours, so they will just have to wait a bit and hope the someone is good at performing CPR. It makes absolutely no sense. No one ever chooses the moment they will need emergency assistance.

I would also like to say one last time that it is understandable that the volume of distress calls is not always the same when we are talking about search and rescue and medical help. It is fact of life that the call volume goes down in the evening, but we still have to be ready in case a call does come in, because lives are at stake.

The Conservative government has to make choices in its budget and in the budget bill. When we talk about the Canadian Forces, Canadians understand the need to set high standards in order to promote effective search and rescue services. People would understand if the government made that choice. This is a question of choice. The Conservatives can make that choice and avoid needlessly putting lives in danger.

• (1120)

[English]

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today and speak to the motion introduced by my neighbouring colleague with respect to search and rescue in Newfoundland and Labrador.

*Private Members' Business*

Search and rescue is extremely important to Newfoundland and Labrador. Many thousands of miles of coastline and many different industries depend on search and rescue, from the fishery to the offshore oil to people at its location. St. John's has long been a hop-off for many people, adventurers who go across the Atlantic. Our search and rescue boundaries go well beyond just our immediate shorelines.

As a member of Parliament, it is a privilege and an honour to serve in this House. It is also a privilege and honour to go out and experience first-hand what our men and women do in the armed forces, in particular with respect to search and rescue. I have had an opportunity in the last year and a half to do two things. The first is that I spent three days at CFB Greenwood to see what our men and women in the armed forces do. I had an opportunity to see our SAR techs' abilities and to see them in action.

Let us not mistake this motion before this House today. It does nothing to talk about the excellent work of our SAR techs. It does not criticize them. We have great Canadian Forces members who do excellent work for the men and women in our armed forces. The SAR techs in particular are amazing individuals. The knowledge and comprehension required of these men and women as SAR techs is amazing, whether it is of high angle rescue, scuba diving or first aid.

This motion today does not talk about our forces. I heard the Conservative members talking about how much our search and rescue means, and I absolutely agree. This motion talks about response times. We are talking about 30 minutes to wheels up and being in the air. Currently that response time is Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 5:00, regular working hours. However, times have changed over the last 20 to 30 years. When this was first established, there probably were not a lot of people on the water outside of those normal hours. This has been on the books for many years. Times change, and so should the services we provide to Canadians. We need to look at that.

The second thing I did as a member of Parliament since being elected was tour the marine search and rescue sub-centre in St. John's, which the government has decided to close. It is another important search and rescue asset and is done through the Coast Guard. If one tours this facility, the local knowledge and skills that these people have on the ground in Newfoundland and Labrador is unbelievable. To stand on guard listening for that distress call is an important part of the search and rescue debate. To close the search and rescue sub-centre in St. John's does not make sense to any of us in Newfoundland and Labrador, because the people who are listening for that call know the local area, know what to listen for, and know the land and the sea. It is very disappointing that the government has chosen to do this.

Getting back to the motion at hand, members talk about "wheels up, ready to go", this international standard of 30 minutes. The Americans pride themselves on their American Coast Guard. We often see it portrayed in a lot of circumstances. We need to portray our search and rescue in the same fashion. To be honest, I do not know what the standard is in the United States. However, in Canada we have to make sure that we have that 30-minute response time.

Are we surprised that the government is not supporting this particular motion? No, because a year or so ago the member for

Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke was in Newfoundland and Labrador on a committee meeting, and she came under fire from our province for her comments regarding search and rescue in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in the country. This is where we get to the crux of the matter, which is the fact that the government just does not get this particular aspect.

• (1125)

I would like to read a quote from when the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke was there and made a statement. It reads as follows:

Explaining that those who operate on the Great Lakes and Ottawa River don't count on the Coast Guard for help, the Ottawa Valley MP told an audience in St. John's — including those who lost relatives and fellow workers during marine accidents — that it's up to local communities, the province and private companies to make more of an effort to help with rescues and perhaps finance such services.

This is what the Conservatives think. They think it should not be up to the national government and that we should download it onto the provinces and put more burden on them. We should put this onto volunteer groups. They should be in charge of search and rescue.

The member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, who sits on the defence committee, went on to state:

In Ontario we have inland seas, the Great Lakes, and it would never occur to any of us, even up the Ottawa River, to count on the Coast Guard to come and help us.

Search and rescue is for all Canadians. It is there for the Great Lakes, the Ottawa River, the St. Lawrence Seaway. One never knows when one is going to need search and rescue.

Time is very important. We need look no further than what happened to young Burton Winters in Makkovik this past winter. Time ran out on him after he walked almost 19 kilometres. In some circumstances, all we have is time, and the quicker search and rescue can get on site and deploy the resources needed, the better.

The cost on this to government is not a large amount of money. This is about scheduling. This is about having a couple of extra search and rescue crews on each of the bases, so that a 24/7, 30-minute response time can be scheduled. The costs now are even higher, because when a call does not fall into the 8:00 to 5:00 slot on Monday to Friday, there is overtime and other costs that come along with it. If we did the research, we would realize that it would not cost that much more to provide such a valuable service with a 30-minute response time. Weather never co-operates on the east coast of this great country, and we never know what to expect with regard to the weather. A 30-minute response time is very important, and we should strive toward this international response time so that our brave men and women who do this excellent work will continue to serve their country well.

*Private Members' Business*

I am pleased to have had an opportunity to speak to this motion today. Search and rescue is a valuable resource. The government needs to reconsider its decision to close the sub-centres in St. John's and Quebec City, just for linguistic purposes alone.

There is a community in my riding called Upper Island Cove. It is affectionately called Island Cove. When a call comes in from someone in Upper Island Cove, search and rescue staff need to know where the individuals are. If the people only have 30 seconds before their ship goes down and they are off of Upper Island Cove in Newfoundland, the person on the other end needs to know that they are off of Upper Island Cove, not Lower Island Cove. There is a very short window of time to get a distress call out, and that plays into the search and rescue assets being deployed. Many marine disasters that happen with fishing vessels occur early in the morning or late at night as they are steaming home with their catches. It is very important that they receive an on-time and timely search and rescue response.

I congratulate the member for St. John's East on putting this motion before the House. It is something that should be considered. There is nothing wrong with government saying it needs to strive toward this response time. I encourage all members who live in coastal communities, the Conservative members too, to strive toward a 30-minute response time. It might take some time for us to get there, but that should be our goal in today's day and age: a 30-minute response time.

I encourage all members, in particular those on the government side, to strive toward this important goal for search and rescue in our country.

● (1130)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have the opportunity to speak to the motion introduced by my hon. colleague from St. John's East.

This issue is very important to me, because I represent a maritime region. Many coastal communities are very concerned about maritime search and rescue operations, which save the lives of fishers, mariners and pleasure boaters, who flock to the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands.

People condemn the fact that there is a double standard in Canada right now. One standard applies on weekdays, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. During that time period, it takes 30 minutes to launch a search and rescue operation to save fishers or mariners. I am not saying that search and rescue workers do not give their all. These people are clearly very brave, and we really appreciate the dangerous work they do. They go through some very intense training.

The fact is there is simply not enough staff for dealing with the high volume of recreational boaters who are active outside regular working hours, on weekends, which, statistics show, is when 80% of the emergency calls enter our system.

There is a major disconnect between the service offered and the resources required to have the first-rate service we deserve in a free and democratic country such as Canada. We expect first-rate service.

Recently, there was question as to whether closing the marine rescue centre in St. John's, Newfoundland, would have an impact. For example, a sea captain with a health problem radioed the centre, but the centre did not have enough staff. The call had to be directed to a doctor in Rome. First, obviously the doctor was not familiar with the Newfoundland dialect. Second, he was unfamiliar with the Grand Banks of the Atlantic Ocean. Third, he did not know the risks this poor captain was facing. All this is very worrisome.

The budget cuts the Conservatives are proposing today, with Bill C-38 for instance, will endanger the lives of our fishers, mariners and recreational boaters. Canadians expect the federal government to protect them, but this government is abandoning them.

Frankly, Bill C-38 should not be passed by this House and today's motion moved by the hon. member for St. John's East on the staff at the search and rescue centres, is a good reason why not. We do not have the means to save Canadians' lives and we should be ashamed.

The Conservatives are offering solutions to fix the staff shortage. We already know that many of the fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft need to be replaced. What is the government proposing as a replacement? It is proposing the F-35 fighter jets. Those planes are not built for saving lives. They are built for war.

Should the Conservative government's top priority not be Canadians' health and safety, instead of going ahead with plans to declare war elsewhere? Resources absolutely have to be in place here, in Canada, but that is just not the case. The Cormorant, Griffon, Hercules and Buffalo aircraft are all in an abysmal state of repair. We absolutely must replace a great deal of our equipment, and that is just not happening.

● (1135)

There are delays and discussions. There is talk, but no action. We have seen the consequences of not replacing equipment. We can cite the death of Burton Winters in Makkovik, Labrador, which is really not that far from Gander, where there is a rescue centre. We should have been able to save that young man, but we did not mainly because we did not have the resources. If someone finds themselves in trouble after four o'clock in the afternoon, too bad for them. There is a good chance that they will not make it because the Government of Canada is not there to provide the help they need and expect.

Quite frankly, it is shameful to spend money on F-35s when the lives of Canadians are at risk. Many Canadians died last year, and that will continue. It is a real shame.

*Private Members' Business*

It makes no sense to endanger the lives of our fishers, mariners and pleasure boat operators in the name of budget cuts. We must obviously consider the state of Canada's finances, but not to the point where we jeopardize people's very lives. This is what is troubling about the Conservatives. Perhaps they misunderstood the consultations conducted last year. The Standing Committee on National Defence travelled to Gander and Halifax, and committee members met people and heard testimony from individuals who requested improved and increased resources and better service.

The committee was unfortunately unable to publish its report. Many members in the House may not have had a chance to read the testimony. I invite members from all parties to take note of the evidence received by the Standing Committee on National Defence in late January or early February of last year. It would definitely be instructive to read it even though the report was not published.

We understood that Canadians felt the Conservative government was not doing enough. In fact, it is even doing the opposite. It is cutting budgets at a time when we need more resources. It is making cutbacks of nearly \$80 million at Fisheries and Oceans Canada. It has made cuts to the Coast Guard. The vessel traffic services centres are shutting down, and the rescue centres are closing. No service improvements are planned, quite the contrary. More people will definitely be at risk than in the past. I believe the Conservatives will pay a heavy price for the choices they are making today. Endangering people's lives in order to save pennies—mere scraps—is incomprehensible.

The government claims to be saving \$1 million by closing the Quebec City rescue centre. The Trenton rescue centre, however, which was supposed to replace it in large part, is unable to do so. Nearly \$1 million will have to be spent to upgrade it to the level of the rescue centre being closed.

You do not save money just to spend it later. Doing that not only risks the lives of fishers, mariners and pleasure boaters, but it also puts the lives of francophone fishers, mariners and pleasure boaters at particular risk.

In a recent report, the Commissioner of Official Languages pointed out that closing the search and rescue sub-centre in Quebec City will put francophones especially at risk. Clearly, Trenton is not likely to have a large bilingual population. I know that the people in Trenton do a very good job—it is a renowned military centre—but the fact is that they are not known for their bilingualism or their ability to understand the Acadian accent and dialect.

In addition, the government has closed the rescue sub-centre in St. John's, Newfoundland, and transferred the staff to Halifax, but the people there do not know the Grand Banks or the Newfoundland dialect. The government is putting people's lives at risk to save a few bucks. We do not even know for sure that this move will save money. At the end of the day, I believe it will cost money and lives, and that is truly shameful. It makes no sense to risk the lives of our fishers, sailors and pleasure boaters.

The Conservatives will have to answer for this, and they should be ashamed.

● (1140)

**Ms. Éleine Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in this House today to support the motion moved by the member for St. John's East concerning search and rescue in Canada.

This motion states that Canada lags behind international search and rescue norms, and it calls on the government to recognize the responsibility of the Canadian Forces for the protection of Canadians and to take such measures as may be required for Canada to achieve the common international readiness standard of 30 minutes at all times, from tasking to becoming airborne, in response to search and rescue incidents.

The purpose of this important motion is to fill a major gap in Canada's current system. As a number of my colleagues have explained, the Canadian Forces currently have two different response times for search and rescue incidents. Response times are set according to the hours of work generally in effect in other occupations. During regular business hours, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., the response time is 30 minutes.

During those hours, it takes 30 minutes or less between the time authorities give an order and the time the rescue vehicle leaves the military base where it is stationed. However, the situation is completely different at other times. Between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m., and on weekends and holidays, the response standard for search and rescue teams is 120 minutes. In other words, it takes two hours to organize a search and rescue operation to respond to an emergency situation where human lives are at stake.

Such a double standard is unacceptable when people's survival depends on the speed of the response. My colleagues from Newfoundland and Labrador spoke movingly about certain tragedies at sea, where people lost their lives because search and rescue operations took too long to get organized. They referred, among other incidents, to the tragic case of the *Melina and Keith II*, a fishing vessel that sank off the coast of Newfoundland, around 5:30 p.m., on September 12, 2005.

Of the eight fishermen who originally survived, only four made it. Unfortunately, the other four died because they were not rescued quickly enough. Canadian Forces helicopters took 3 hours and 8 minutes to reach the site where the boat had sunk. Since this tragic incident occurred during what is considered a down time for the Canadian Forces, that is after 4 p.m., the 30-minute response standard did not apply.

It is absurd to think that, had the *Melina and Keith II* sunk just two hours earlier, four fishermen could have been saved because the Canadian Forces would have had to have responded within 30 minutes.

It is obvious that this two-tier system for search and rescue operations in Canada is not adequate in its existing form. As parliamentarians, we have a duty to examine this issue and to try to correct the serious flaws in the system, which jeopardize the lives of many Canadians.



*Private Members' Business*

Given that close to 80% of emergencies occur outside the period covered by the 30-minute response time, it is obvious that things must change. According to a report produced by Seacom International for the Standing Committee on National Defence, Canada ranks last when it comes to rescue times for search and rescue operations. Indeed, Seacom International, which specializes in emergency preparedness, puts us in last place, behind Australia, Ireland, Mexico and the United States, among others.

I think it is worth taking another look at the comparison between our standards and international standards. As I mentioned, under Canadian standards, rescue time is 30 minutes during the day and 120 minutes between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m., and on weekends.

• (1145)

When we look at what happens in Ireland, we can see that the norm for response time is 15 minutes during the day—that is, from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.—and 45 minutes after 9:00 p.m. In Australia, the response time is 30 minutes around the clock. Australia has a vast area to cover. It has kilometres and kilometres of coastline. Yet they provide a 30-minute service, day and night, for people in distress on their shores.

If we look at the United States, the same thing is happening. We are talking about 30 minutes 24/7. Here in Canada, response time outside regular working hours is two hours for people in distress. It simply makes no sense; we have to change the current norms to comply with international standards that are in effect almost everywhere and that make perfect sense. We have enough resources. If we redistribute the resources we currently have, we will be able to provide this service to every Canadian, and to all the people in distress on our shores.

We absolutely must make search and rescue a priority here in Canada. Like many other countries, Canada has many kilometres of coastline; British Columbia, the north, the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Maritimes and other areas come to mind. We have to make sure that all Canada's coasts are protected and that we allocate sufficient resources to ensure that all people who find themselves in emergency situations along our coasts have the best possible chance of survival.

Canadians' health and safety must be a priority for us, for every parliamentarian, regardless of their political party. The priority should not be F-35 fighter planes that are going to cost Canadians billions of dollars and will not necessarily save Canadians' lives when they need it. We have to set priorities that directly serve our fellow Canadians. We have to admit that the cuts being made by the government are going to make the already difficult job of the Canadian Forces, when it comes to search and rescue operations, even more difficult than it is now.

People complain there are not enough personnel, but even more pressure is going to be put on Trenton and Halifax, for example, to try to meet the needs that are currently covered by the maritime search and rescue centres in Quebec City and St. John's. Considering the language requirements, we see that this has been brought up in this House a number of times. It is not clear that the military bases, for example in Trenton, are going to be able to provide people with bilingual services. As well, the closure of the maritime search and

rescue centre in Quebec City has been moved back a year because the needs cannot be met by Trenton at present.

In addition, the need for someone to be understood in their own language immediately is a matter of life or death when they are facing an accident at sea. Sometimes it is a matter of seconds that can change how an event turns out and save someone's life. We have to make sure that the people who answer distress calls are able to provide equivalent service to everyone, and that is not the case at present with the changes announced by the Conservatives.

As well, the closure of the maritime search and rescue centres in Quebec City and St. John's will cause a significant loss of expertise, and that is for the Gulf of St. Lawrence alone. That is a coastline with quite specific features. There are many dangers and it takes people several years to get to know that coastline well enough that they can help people. By closing that centre and centralizing all operations in Trenton and Halifax, for example, we lose that expertise and we endanger people's lives.

So if we put these cuts in perspective, and add in the fact that there is a double standard when it comes to rescue times in Canada, we clearly have a responsibility, as parliamentarians, to consider this issue and do everything we can to guarantee Canadians' safety. This issue has to be discussed in the House, as we are doing now. This is an important debate and I urge all members to vote in favour of this extremely important motion, as I will be doing with pride, and as my colleagues will be doing as well.

• (1150)

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is important for me to speak to the motion introduced by the member for St. John's East.

First, I can announce that the Bloc Québécois will be supporting this motion. I also invite all parliamentarians in the House to support this bill, which goes beyond any type of partisanship and will necessarily help all pleasure boaters, fishers and all people who go to sea in our waters.

The motion as worded states that the government must take all such measures as may be required to achieve the international readiness standard of 30 minutes. That standard is essential to the survival of our people who go to sea.

Far from promoting progress toward the response time target, the government is making a decision that does not reflect the importance of this service, which must be quick and effective.

As I said earlier, every minute counts when action is taken at sea. In a country whose motto is "From Sea to Sea", the government seems at times not to realize that the motto means more than words; it requires an understanding of reality and some concrete actions.

The government can no longer disregard that reality: we have a large marine area to cover and thus the responsibility to ensure that the people who navigate in our territorial waters are protected by high-quality services and a rapid response.

Fishers and pleasure boaters are entitled to service that meets the international 30-minute standard. Why not aim for a shorter response time?

*Private Members' Business*

But what is the government doing? The Conservatives have announced the closing of the Quebec City marine rescue centre. They have also announced the closing of the Rivière-au-Renard maritime radio station, which is at the port of entry to the gulf. This means that 15 jobs will be lost in our region. The closing of that station increases the danger to shipping in the gulf. Les Escoumins maritime radio station will now have to cover all of eastern Quebec, which will increase the workload of the people there. They are already doing an outstanding job, but an even greater burden is being placed on their shoulders.

Knowledge of our territorial waters is crucial in responding appropriately to the captain of any type of vessel navigating in Canada's territorial waters. People are concerned, both fishers and pleasure craft operators.

I enjoy sailing myself. I have a pleasure craft licence and have sailed in different situations. Sometimes conditions deteriorate very quickly in our waters; there are a number of dangers. So, if the need for help arises—and we hope it never does—it is important to be able to count on a service that is able to respond quickly and efficiently in order to save lives.

The Commissioner of Official Languages also expressed concern about the transfer of the emergency centre to Trenton. When people get into situations that lead them to call for help, they sometimes become nervous, because it is an emergency for them. For French-speakers—most of the people in Quebec waters—getting a response from someone who does not fully understand their language can increase the danger. The language barrier can also reduce the ability to respond appropriately to a specific emergency request.

That is why the search and rescue sub-centre in Quebec City must be maintained and why the government must support the motion introduced by the hon. member for St. John's East, which calls for the achievement of the readiness standard of 30 minutes.

I urge every member of this House to set aside all partisan differences and to meet the needs of fishers, pleasure boaters and anyone sailing anywhere in our waters.

• (1155)

[English]

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank members on both sides of the House who participated in this debate. A lot of people took the opportunity to talk about search and rescue in general, and I am very glad to see it given that attention in the House. It ought to be a greater priority, we believe, for Canadian Forces. Therefore, the attention being given to it from all parts of the country is certainly valuable and worthwhile.

I did not really hear any rationale for not supporting this motion. We know that SAR involves many elements, but the Canadian Forces' response time with helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft is extremely important in getting to an emergency, particularly at sea. The position of the double standard of 30 minutes during the 8:00 to 4:00 period and two hours afterwards, when about 80% plus of the taskings take place, is really unsupportable.

The Kitsilano Coast Guard station, which was closed down by this government, with 12 people, provides a rescue crew of 3 people at any one time who can respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the

whole year round, and they can do so within 1 to 2 minutes of being tasked.

Coast Guard ships on SAR standby duty are able to embark within 30 minutes, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In St. John's if someone is in a helicopter being transported to the Hibernia, or any other oil platform off the coast of Newfoundland, there is another SAR helicopter required to be wheels up in 15 to 20 minutes. This is a result of the recommendation of the Wells inquiry into the Cougar crash of March 2009. If there is an emergency, especially at sea, we need the rescue to "get there fast", to quote the member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley. I agree with him, getting there fast means getting into the air fast, to get there.

Therefore, why do we continue with a system that says we can have a SAR aircraft in the air within 30 minutes between 8:00 and 4:00 on weekdays, but outside that, when as I mentioned over 80% of the tasking takes place, the standard required is two hours?

Members opposite said that we are unique and that this is the reason why we must have our own standard. Well, we certainly are unique in the world. We are in fact the second-largest country in the world, which is all the more reason we need to get into the air faster. We also have the longest coastline in the world. We have to remember we are going from only four places for primary aeronautical SAR for all of Canada: Gander, in Newfoundland and Labrador; Greenwood, in Nova Scotia; Trenton, Ontario; and Comox, B.C. There are four places for all of Canada, including the Arctic. Getting there fast means getting into the air fast and that requires a better standard than we have.

Other countries have set a better standard. The United States and Australia have 30 minutes to wheels up, 24/7, 365 days. Norway has a 15-minute standard for getting a helicopter into the air, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland have an elongated day, 15 minutes in the daytime up until 9:00 or 10:00 at night and 45 minutes overnight. Even Mexico has around-the-clock 40-minute wheels up, in the air.

These countries can do this; why can we not? Why can we not give the priority to search and rescue that it deserves? Why can we not have a 21st century rescue service that can respond quickly, as other countries can? Even the United States, for example, has not only the 30-minute standard but a standard that says they have to be at any place in their area of responsibility within a total of 90 minutes. A country like Canada should be looking at standards like that to be sure we can meet our commitments to our citizens, in particular the Canadian Forces, whose job it is to defend Canada and protect Canadians.

I urge members opposite who have considered voting against this motion to change their minds. We would sure like you have their support for improving search and rescue standards in Canada, to help save lives, particularly for those who are in desperate emergencies that require search and rescue to get there as soon as possible.

• (1200)

[Translation]

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion, the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

[English]

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 13, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

\* \* \*

• (1205)

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### BILL C-38—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on June 5, by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands regarding the form of Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures.

[Translation]

I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for having raised the matter, as well as the hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the hon. House leader of the official opposition, the hon. House leader of the Liberal Party, and the hon. members for Winnipeg Centre, Winnipeg North and Thunder Bay—Superior North for their comments.

The foundation of the arguments brought forward by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is that Bill C-38 has not been brought forward in a proper form and is, therefore, imperfect and must be set aside. Specifically, the member relies on Standing Order 68(3), which states that, “no bill may be introduced either in blank or in an imperfect shape”.

[English]

In laying out her case, she argues that in its current form the bill fails the test of being “a proper omnibus bill”; first, because it lacks

### Speaker's Ruling

one central theme, that is “one basic principle or purpose”; second, because it fails to provide a link between certain items in the bill and the budget itself; and third, because it “omits actions, regulatory and legislative changes” that are purported to be included in it by representatives of the government.

In response, the government House leader indicated that Bill C-38, as a budget implementation bill, had as its unifying theme the implementation of the budget. This, he reminded the House, arose from the adoption of the budget by the House. To use his words, “The budget sets the clear policy direction and the budget implementation bill implements that direction” and is “a comprehensive suite of measures designed to ensure jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity”.

[Translation]

Before I address the arguments put forward in this case, it is perhaps useful to remind members of what the provisions of Standing Order 68(3)—the basis of the point of order raised by the Member for Saanich—Gulf Islands—refer to. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, at page 728, states:

[English]

Since Confederation, the Chair has held that the introduction of bills that contain blank passages or that are in an imperfect shape is clearly contrary to the Standing Orders. A bill in blank or in imperfect shape is a bill which has only a title, or the drafting of which has not been completed. Although this provision exists mainly in contemplation of errors identified when a bill is introduced, Members have brought such defects or anomalies to the attention of the Chair at various stages in the legislative process. In the past, the Speaker has directed that the order for second reading of certain bills be discharged, when it was discovered that they were not in their final form and were therefore not ready to be introduced.

[Translation]

Furthermore, at pages 730 to 734, members can find a description of the various elements that comprise a bill. A bill must have a number, a title, an enacting clause, and clauses. It may also have a preamble, interpretation and coming-into-force provisions, and schedules.

Having reviewed Bill C-38, I can assure the House that it contains all of the required elements and is therefore in proper form in these respects. In addition, the requisite notice was given for its introduction and the bill was preceded by a ways and means motion, as is required. It is also duly accompanied by a royal recommendation.

[English]

Now the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has taken the argument of imperfect shape one step further in stating that Bill C-38 is not in the proper form and that it is not, in her words, “a proper omnibus bill”.

Here again it is perhaps useful to return to *House of Commons, Procedure and Practice*, second edition which states, at page 724, in reference to omnibus bills, “Although this expression is commonly used, there is no precise definition of an omnibus bill”.

[Translation]

It then goes on to state that:

### *Speaker's Ruling*

In general, an omnibus bill seeks to amend, repeal or enact several acts, and is characterized by the fact that it is made up of a number of related but separate initiatives. An omnibus bill has “one basic principle or purpose which ties together all the proposed enactments and thereby renders the bill intelligible for parliamentary purposes.” One of the reasons cited for introducing an omnibus bill is to bring together in a single bill all the legislative amendments arising from a single policy decision in order to facilitate parliamentary debate.

[*English*]

At page 725, O'Brien and Bosc goes on to state:

It appears to be entirely proper, in procedural terms, for a bill to amend, repeal or enact more than one Act, provided that the requisite notice is given, that it is accompanied by a royal recommendation (where necessary), and that it follows the form required.

● (1210)

[*Translation*]

Naturally, there have been a number of rulings on the subject. Among these is a ruling given by Speaker Sauvé on June 20, 1983, which can be found at pages 26537 and 26538 of *Debates*, where she stated that:

[*English*]

—although some occupants in the Chair have expressed concern about the practice of incorporating several distinct principles in a single bill, they have consistently found that such bills are procedurally in order and properly before the House.

[*Translation*]

On April 11, 1994, Speaker Parent faced similar objections to another budget bill—C-17—when a member argued that the House was being asked to take a single decision on a number of unrelated items. As can be found at pages 2859 to 2861 of the *Debates*, the Speaker disagreed, noting that in the Chair's opinion:

[*English*]

—a common thread does run through Bill C-17; namely, the government's intention to enact the provisions in the recent budget, including measures to extend the fiscal restraint measures currently in place.

The second argument raised by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, which is irrevocably linked to her first argument regarding the need for a central theme, was that there were elements found in Bill C-38 that were not provided for in the budget. It would be useful, at this juncture, to remind members that the long title of Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, is very broad, as is typical in bills of this kind. Clause 1 of the bill, which contains its short title, provides that “This act may be cited as the Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity Act” and thus restates the very broad scope of the measure. O'Brien and Bosc, at page 731, notes that the long title sets out the purpose of the bill, in general terms, and must accurately reflect its content.

Speaker Fraser, on June 8, 1988, at page 16257 of the *Debates*, also referred to the use in our practice of generic language in bill titles and stated that, “every act being amended need not be mentioned in the title”.

If the long title had been specific and limited in scope, then the hon. member might have had a sounder basis for claiming that the bill went beyond what was contained in the budget. However, the title of Bill C-38 is wide in scope, and therefore, it is an accepted practice that the content of the bill could be similarly broad.

[*Translation*]

The third point raised by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands relates to her contention that representatives of the government, during debate at second reading of Bill C-38, claimed that the bill gave legislative effect to policy decisions that are not in fact contained in the bill.

What the member is raising here is perhaps a question of relevance in debate or a dispute as to facts. As Speaker Milliken stated at page 5411 of the *Debates* on October 27, 2010:

[*English*]

It is not the Speaker's role to determine who is right and who is wrong. I know there are disagreements over some things that are said in this House, but it is not up to the Speaker to decide either way.

It may well be that members, in their remarks, spoke about elements of the government's fiscal or regulatory policy intentions that were not contained in the bill, or that may flow from the bill if it is passed. These are matters that are beyond the purview of the Speaker. Given the generous latitude for relevance which is typically accorded to members on such wide-ranging debates, including that on the budget, it is in keeping with parliamentary practice that issues raised in debate would not exactly mirror the contents of legislation in every respect. As such, while these concerns are certainly pertinent to the wider debate surrounding the bill, they do not, in and of themselves, point to a technical deficiency in the bill itself.

[*Translation*]

As the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands noted, my predecessors have frequently been called upon to rule on matters pertaining to omnibus bills. In this regard, her argument that, “... there is a compelling case that the House must act to set limits around omnibus legislation” is one that has been made before. On these occasions, the key question faced by Speakers has been: What is the role of the Chair in dealing with such matters?

[*English*]

As Speaker Sauvé said on March 2, 1982 at page 15532 of the *Debates*:

It may be that the House should accept rules or guidelines as to the form and content of omnibus bills, but in that case the House, and not the Speaker, must make those rules.

Speaker Fraser, in the June 8, 1988 ruling referred to by the member, advanced his own view of the role of the Chair in dealing with omnibus bills, by stating, at page 16257 of *Debates*:

Until the House adopts specific rules relating to omnibus bills, the Chair's role is very limited and the Speaker should remain on the sidelines as debate proceeds and the House resolves the issue.

Indeed, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands herself also recognized the limited role of the Speaker in such circumstances, stating:

It is clear that the Speaker is not, at present and in absence of rules from the House to limit the length and complexities of omnibus bills, entitled to rule that an omnibus bill is too long, too complex or too broad in scope.

It may well be time for members to consider our practices for dealing with omnibus bills. However, in the absence of any clear rules, I find myself agreeing with Speaker Fraser, that the most appropriate role for the chair is to step aside and allow the House to determine the matter.

• (1215)

[Translation]

When addressing similar matters in relation to omnibus bills, Speaker Jerome on May 11, 1977, at page 5523 of *Debates*, and Speaker Parent on April 11, 1994, at page 2861 of *Debates*, both suggested that members could propose amendments at report stage to delete clauses they felt should not be part of a bill, or vote against it. We all know that this has certainly been done with respect to Bill C-38.

[English]

In the same ruling by Speaker Parent, again at page 2861 of *Debates*, he stated:

—it is procedurally correct and common practice for a bill to amend, repeal, or enact several statutes. There are numerous rulings in which Speakers have declined to intervene simply because a bill was complex and permitted omnibus legislation to proceed.

Perhaps the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which is engaged in a review of the Standing Orders, could examine this thorny issue as part of its study, but until such time as the House feels compelled to set new limits on omnibus legislation, as your Speaker, I must continue to be guided by current rules and practice.

Having reviewed the submissions made by hon. members and the relevant precedents, including the many rulings just cited, the Chair cannot agree with the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands to conclude that Bill C-38 is not in the proper form and therefore should not be allowed to proceed.

In the absence of rules or guidelines regarding omnibus legislation, the Chair cannot justify setting aside Bill C-38 and accordingly must rule that Bill C-38, in its current form, is in order.

[Translation]

I thank hon. members for their attention.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### JOBS, GROWTH AND LONG-TERM PROSPERITY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

[English]

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** As members are aware, the chair does not ordinarily provide an explanation on the basis for the report stage ruling. In cases where there are a large number of amendments or where the relations among them are complex, it has been found helpful to provide some description of the underlying organization of

### Government Orders

the ruling. I believe that the case before us today is one in which the House may benefit from some comments in this regard.

[Translation]

I remind the House that my comments are limited to addressing procedural issues relating to report stage and to my responsibility as Speaker to ensure that the relevant provisions contained in the Standing Orders are complied with.

On February 27, 2001, the House adopted a motion to add an additional paragraph to the “note” to Standing Order 76(5) and 76.1 (5). That additional final paragraph added to the note reads as follows:

[English]

For greater clarity, the Speaker will not select for debate a motion or series of motions of a repetitive, frivolous or vexatious nature or of a nature that would serve merely to prolong unnecessarily proceedings at the report stage and, in exercising this power of selection, the Speaker shall be guided by the practice followed in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom.

As mentioned in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, at page 778, “This occurred in response to the flooding of the Notice Paper with hundreds of amendments”.

Following the adoption of this new note in the Standing Orders, Speaker Milliken made a statement, *Debates*, March 21, 2001, pages 1991 to 1993, regarding how the Chair would interpret this note which has formed the basis of our current practice with regards to the selection of motions at report stage. If I may add, this process appears to have effectively served the House since that time.

[Translation]

Given the infrequency with which similar cases to those that led to the introduction of the note have arisen in the past decade, the Speaker has little in the way of precedent to guide him in arranging the report stage motions in a manner which will adequately reflect the various competing interests in the House.

In reviewing the motions placed before the House, there are essentially two types of motions the Chair has received. First, hundreds of motions to delete individual clauses in the bill have been placed on notice as well as a second group of amendments which seek to amend the text of a clause.

[English]

The recent precedents in relation to both types of motions are clear. For example, motions to delete clauses have always been found to be in order and it must also be noted have been selected at report stage. These motions are allowed at report stage because members may wish to express views on a clause without seeking to amend it. As is the case on such occasions, I have tried to minimize the amount of time spent in the House on this kind of motion by grouping them as tightly as possible and by applying the vote on one to as many others as possible.

*Government Orders*

The second group of motions, which seek to amend the text of individual clauses, have been submitted by members who had no opportunity to present amendments at committee stage and, consistent with the current practice, their motions have also been selected, except in the case where similar motions had already been considered by the committee and where all other procedural requirements have been met. The grouping of these motions follows the divisions of the bill. Motions have been grouped by the members submitting them for each clause of the bill. The vote on the first motion will be applied to the member's other motions in that class.

Although 871 motions have been placed on the notice paper, it is clearly not intended, nor do our rules and practices lend themselves to the taking of 871 consecutive votes. With respect to the voting table, substantive amendments have been grouped so as to allow for a clear expression of opinion on each of the subject areas contained in the bill. Motions to delete have been dealt with in conformity with the grouping scheme outlined above.

● (1220)

[Translation]

As your Speaker, I am fully aware of the extraordinary nature of the current situation. In reviewing the March 2001 statement by then Speaker Milliken, I was struck by the following, which I feel might have some resonance today:

[English]

As your Speaker, I am ready to shoulder the report stage responsibilities that the House has spelled out for me. However, I think it would be naive to hope that the frustrations implicit in the putting on notice of hundreds of motions in amendment of a bill will somehow be answered by bringing greater rigour to the Speaker's process of selection.

Since the decision of the House on February 27, 2001 to add the final paragraph to the note in the Standing Orders regarding report stage, there are few precedents to guide the Speaker in dealing with this type of situation. In my selection of motions, in their grouping and in the organization of the votes, I have made every effort to respect both the wishes of the House and my responsibility to organize the consideration of report stage motions in a fair and balanced manner. To the extent that some may have differing views concerning the decisions taken, it may be that the House or perhaps the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs will wish to revisit the adequacy of our rules and practices in dealing with cases of this extraordinary nature.

There are 871 motions in amendment standing on the notice paper for the report stage of C-38.

[Translation]

The Chair will not select Motions Nos. 570, 571, 576, 626 to 628, 630, 842 and 843, since they require a royal recommendation. The Chair will not select Motions Nos. 411 and 412, because they were defeated in committee.

[English]

Motions Nos. 27, 29, 39, 55 to 61, 71, 73, 75, 83, 85 and 545 will not be selected by the Chair as they would introduce inconsistencies.

All remaining motions have been examined and the Chair is satisfied that they meet the guidelines expressed in the note to

Standing Order 76.1(5) regarding the selection of motions in amendment at the report stage.

The motions will be grouped for debate as follows:

Group No. 1, Motions Nos. 1 to 15.

[Translation]

Group No. 2, Motions Nos. 16 to 23.

[English]

Group No. 3, Motions Nos. 24 to 26, 28, 30 to 38, 40 to 54, 62 to 70, 72, 74, 76 to 82, 84 and 86 to 367.

Group No. 4, Motions Nos. 368 to 410, 413 to 544, 546 to 569, 572 to 575, 577 to 625, 629, 631 to 841 and 844 to 871.

[Translation]

The voting patterns for the motions within each group are available at the table. The Chair will remind the House of each pattern at the time of voting.

[English]

I shall now propose Motions Nos. 1 to 15 in Group No. 1 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.)** moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 1.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.)** moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP)** seconded by the member for Etobicoke North, moved:

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-38, in Clause 7, be amended by replacing lines 1 to 5 on page 7 with the following:

““political activity” means the making of a gift by a donor to a qualified donee for the purpose of allowing the donor to maintain a level of funding of political activities that is less than 10% of its income for a taxation year by delegating the carrying out of political activities to the qualified donee;”

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-38, in Clause 7, be amended by replacing line 5 on page 8 with the following:

“interest, being any activity that contributes to the social or cultural lives of Canadians or that contributes to Canada's economic or ecological well-being.”

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.)** moved:

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

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Motion No. 10

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 10.

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 11.

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 13.

• (1225)

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ)** moved:

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 16.

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-38, in Clause 16, be amended by replacing line 5 on page 14 with the following:

“on January 1, 2013 a salary of \$137,000.”

[*English*]

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-38 be amended by deleting Clause 17.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are now at the report stage. I am very sad to say that the Government of Canada has been totally deaf to our entreaties to reconsider its outrageously anti-democratic approach to the budget implementation bill, an approach which will have profound implications for our country. Simply stated, the Conservative government has said to Canadians, “This is how we do things and that is the way it is going to be”. It brings to mind the schoolyard bully who never felt the need to explain his actions but just went ahead and did what he wanted to do.

However, I have news for the government. Canadians do not like it and they are waking up to the way the government is doing things. Who would have thought that Canadians would be familiar with procedures such as prorogation or time allocation during debates or the use of in camera in committees? Slowly but surely, Canadians are beginning to understand these procedures and beginning to question what the government meant when it promised, six and a half years ago, to be open, transparent and, most of all, accountable. I believe Canadians are beginning to feel that there is a contradiction between what has been promised and what is actually being done by the government.

[*Translation*]

It has come to this. All the opposition parties have been asking the government from the start to split the enormous, 425-page Bill C-38. That way, the changes that are not directly or even indirectly related to the budget but that will have significant consequences on our country could be addressed separately.

I am talking about the changes that affect the way we assess the environmental risks associated with developing our natural resources. I am talking about changes to the Fisheries Act, which will put endangered species at greater risk of extinction. I am also talking about changes to the criteria for old age security, or the OAS eligibility age, which will go from 65 to 67 as of 2023.

In our analysis, we found that this change is not necessary and that the Canadian economy has the means to allow Canadians to receive old age security at 65. In any event, is this change proposed by the

government so urgent for the economy that we need to include it in this budget bill? Why does this change not merit its own bill?

The same can be said about the unprecedented changes to employment insurance, which could result in significant changes in the regions, especially those where seasonal employment is the norm. These are unprecedented changes and the federal government has not even taken the time to consult the provinces, which could be hard hit by a decline in population or an increase in requests for social assistance.

• (1230)

[*English*]

In all, more than 60 pieces of legislation would be modified, created or deleted by Bill C-38. The government's only argument for charging ahead is that the economy is fragile and it cannot wait. This is, of course, preposterous since many of the changes in the bill are not remotely time critical or, in many cases, even related to what we would expect in a budget implementation plan. Old age security changes would be 11 years away. Why do the Conservatives think they can behave this way? And will somebody in the government explain to me why Canada's economic stability is critically dependent on changes to the Fisheries Act being implemented immediately?

We live in a democracy. In democracies, even those with majority governments, there is a proper way to enact legislation and it is not by cramming a very large number of pieces of legislation into a single bill.

[*Translation*]

I would like to repeat an important point. Not only should Bill C-38 be split into several bills dealing with the environment, fisheries, employment insurance and old age security, among other things, but a government committed to working with the provinces would have consulted them before going ahead with Bill C-38, a bill that will definitely affect the provinces.

Unfortunately, this government ignores everyone and consults no one. This was the case recently with the premiers of the Atlantic provinces on the issue of employment insurance and with the National Assembly last Friday, which once again voted unanimously on changes to employment insurance.

*Government Orders**[English]*

We in the Liberal Party knew from the beginning that the government would not suddenly become reasonable. It is simply not its style. We knew that its members would charge blindly ahead with no intention to listen to reason or to compromise and damn the torpedoes. For that reason we decided that in addition to speaking out loudly and clearly about the government's abuse of democracy, we needed also to maximize the effectiveness of our procedural tactics. If I may say, here the Liberals have quite a bit of experience. We did try to propose substantive amendments to Bill C-38 in committee, but they were rejected. The government simply refused to listen. The result is that we introduced 503 report stage amendments to delete clauses that we felt were unacceptable to this bill.

In addition to this, we worked closely with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands and told her we would support any substantive amendments that she proposed and with which we agreed.

I recognize that the Conservative government has the majority of seats in the House of Commons. I respect that reality. Ultimately, that allows it to do what it wishes. However, that does not mean that ignoring the arguments raised by opposition parties is the smart way to behave, given that opposition parties sometimes propose sensible amendments to government bills. In fact, one might argue that a smart majority government will occasionally listen to the opposition parties and sometimes put a little water in its wine. That is a smart move. It is viewed not so much as a concession or a surrender, but more as a willingness to work together, something Canadians admire and expect from their politicians. So far, this has not happened, but it is not too late.

*[Translation]*

If this government is willing to listen and make compromises, we could work together in the interest of Canadians.

My party is prepared to vote right now on the parts of Bill C-38 that are related to the budget, but the clauses in Bill C-38 that have no direct bearing on the budget should be removed. The government should not be trying to hide important changes to Canada's legislation in this bill.

• (1235)

*[English]*

The Prime Minister did not raise the issue of changing the age of old age security in the last election. He did not talk about overhauling the environmental assessment regulations and legislation or the Fisheries Act. He never mentioned important changes that were coming for employment insurance. These require fulsome debate as well as consultation with the provinces.

I close by appealing to the government to listen to reason. At the end of the day, it can get a great majority of what it wants. However, what it needs to remember is that Canadians will judge it by the way it goes about it.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that seasonal industries are an incredibly important part of the economy, not just of Atlantic Canada but right across this

country from coast to coast. The changes buried within this budget bill would have a significant impact on access to labour for those people who run businesses in seasonal industries, such as forestry, tourism, agriculture, the fishery and construction. We have heard right across this country that the end result would be a depleted pool of skilled labour for those industries.

I am wondering if my colleague could comment on this. There is a total lack of consultation. If there was a bit of consultation, might we be able to avert the negative impact it would have on those seasonal industries?

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the changes to EI being proposed in the budget implementation plan, which were suddenly inserted at the very last minute and for which there was very little detail, which we had to push the government to provide, would have a profound impact on certain parts of this country, particularly for those where employment is seasonal.

At the very least, this extremely complex question, which could result in the depopulation of certain areas and could be a greater burden on the provinces with respect to paying welfare, would have a profound transformational effect and, frankly, simply looks like a policy designed to pull people away from certain regions so that they go to other areas where there is a need for labour. This kind of profound change requires consultation, not only in this House of Commons where we should have had a fulsome debate as a separate bill, but more primarily with the provinces.

We heard the four Atlantic provincial premiers express their concerns. We heard l'Assemblée nationale du Québec last week unanimously vote against these EI changes. That really was a statement more about the fact that they were not being consulted.

Yes, this would have profound ramifications for Canada. The government should have consulted.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a number of questions for my colleague.

Is the hon. member aware that the last three budget implementation acts in the last three years have been larger? Is he aware that there has been more study on this legislation than on any bill in 20 years? Is he also aware that there is an excellent summary at the very start of this legislation that talks about each change?

I think members can actually look at the changes and if something perks their interest they can look at the details.

Would the member not agree that our government is behaving very responsibly, as compared to the Liberal government of the 1990s? We have committed within this budget to maintain health care transfers to the provinces at record levels and have made a long-term commitment, as opposed to the Liberal cuts, to health care, which impacted the provinces in a significant way.



*Government Orders*

• (1240)

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** Mr. Speaker, if one looks at the length of budget implementation bills, one gets a very misleading picture of the situation. It is the breadth of what it entails. Even if one looks at the length and at the last 22 budget implementation bills, on average, the Conservatives' implementation bills are three times longer. I have done the math, and that is the situation.

I want to get back to the breadth of the bill. The breadth of this bill is staggering and cannot remotely be linked to important budgetary changes that need to be done at this time to protect a fragile recovery. The point here is the breadth of the bill. It touches 70 acts of Parliament, either deleting them, modifying them or in some cases creating new ones.

One clause, clause 52, would create an environmental assessment act, 2012, for Canada, and runs for 30 pages. That is what we are concerned about here today, not the length of the document.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks, parliamentarians have been invited to look into the massive so-called “budget bill”, and, as we have been saying for weeks now, this bill is a real Trojan Horse.

It has all sorts of provisions that will have an impact on everything, from old age security, food inspection and healthcare transfers right through to immigration. Of course, one third of this Trojan Horse bill includes significant changes to environmental protection regulations.

In short, this bill repeals the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act and, as a result, cancels all international accountability measures on climate change. Briefly once again, this bill repeals the current Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and, as a result, allows the Conservatives to considerably weaken the assessment system. So, in a nutshell, this bill dismantles the measures that were implemented to protect our environment and turns its back on climate change.

Just imagine what the rest of this bill contains. It is over 400 pages long and amends 60 different pieces of legislation, rescinding half a dozen and adding three, including a complete overhaul of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

[*English*]

I want to stress that the short title of the bill, “jobs, growth and long-term prosperity”, does not reflect its content. First, much of the bill has nothing to do with the budget and, second, the bill is about austerity. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that public sector job cuts will be in the order of 26,800 over the next three years. In addition, about 6,000 contract positions are being cut. The government has refused to detail where many of these cuts will be made, but many of the services and programs that Canadians rely upon will be diminished or eliminated.

It also seems clear that, since our economic recovery has stalled and in the face of global economic uncertainty, the last thing we need are further cutbacks, which will be a further drag on the overall economy.

Have we gained new jobs from the very depths of the economic downturn in 2008-09? Yes, of course. However, since the employ-

ment rate fell dramatically by 2.5% of the working age population at that time, it has only rebounded by 0.6%. Only about one-fifth of the labour market damage from the recession has been repaired. Between one in four or one in three net new jobs created in Canada from the end of 2007 to the end of 2011 went to temporary foreign workers. We have still not recovered from the lost jobs and we have not kept up with population growth.

However, the changes in the bill to employment insurance, rather than helping Canadian families adjust to a chronic shortage of jobs in most parts of the country, seem designed to compel them to abandon their skills in a rush to take any job at all. What a waste of skills at a time when Canada needs vision and leadership to help us transition to a more modern and environmentally sustainable economy.

• (1245)

[*Translation*]

We have somewhat succeeded in opening the debate. The minister finally clarified, in a way, what she has in store for employment insurance, but that cannot replace the normal democratic process.

Even though the Prime Minister has expressed opposition to omnibus bills in the past, the Conservatives do not seem too concerned about them today, but this bill is different. For many of the measures proposed, this is the first time we are hearing about them being in the bill. However, despite the bill's scope, the government is determined to pass it as quickly as possible, without consulting Canadians and their members of Parliament, and without having the bill carefully examined by experts and other stakeholders.

[*English*]

Conservative commentator, Andrew Coyne, wrote in the *National Post*:

Not only does this make a mockery of the confidence convention, shielding bills that would otherwise be defeatable within a money bill, which is not: It makes it impossible to know what Parliament really intended by any of it. We've no idea whether MPs supported or opposed any particular bill in the bunch, only that they voted for the legislation that contained them. There is no common thread that runs between them, no overarching principle; they represent not a single act of policy, but a sort of compulsory buffet.

But there is something quite alarming about Parliament being obliged to rubber-stamp the government's whole legislative agenda at one go.

That was said by a Conservative commentator, and I could not agree more.

[*Translation*]

The Conservatives' approach is very worrisome. The official opposition has tried to work with the government to split the bill and allow the various measures to be debated more substantively and studied more carefully within the proper committees. The Conservatives refused.

*Government Orders*

We have asked for enough time to study the bill within the Standing Committee on Finance. The Conservatives gave us only four minutes per clause. And they refused to give us more time when witnesses representing both sides were unable to attend the meetings, whose schedule was strictly controlled by the Conservatives. This reduced the time for debate even more.

[*English*]

The finance subcommittee set up to study part 3 of the bill had just 12 hours to hear from witnesses on a wide variety of changes to environmental regulation and changes impacting our fisheries and species at risk, including an entirely rewritten environmental assessment act. Our colleagues on the subcommittee reported that hearings were often rushed, often interrupted, that consultation was extremely limited and that a lack of opportunity to draw on the expertise of the standing committees on environment, fisheries and natural resources prevented a proper and robust evaluation of the proposals in the bill.

I regret to say that our experience in the finance committee was much the same. The extremely tight timeline made it impossible for several witnesses to appear, which significantly cut down on our hearing time. Some witnesses, who did appear but did not support the government's position, often had their testimony dismissed. One economist had his work dismissed as garbage, and Paul Kennedy, who spent 20 years in the area of national security and who served as a senior assistant to the deputy minister of public safety, had his testimony dismissed as simply wrong. His error: he voiced concern over the impact of the elimination of the position of the Inspector General of CSIS.

Canadians have every right to expect that their government will listen to the public. The New Democrats were listening, both at committee and at public hearings across the country. We heard from Dr. Haggie, of the Canadian Medical Association, who warned that raising the age of eligibility for old age security was certain to have a negative impact. He emphasized that gnawing away at Canada's social safety net would no doubt force hard choices on some of tomorrow's seniors. The choice between whether to buy groceries or buy their medicine will, in the end, put a greater burden on our health care system.

We heard from a number of experts who warned that the proposed changes to employment insurance would contribute to a low-wage policy by forcing people to take significant pay cuts or be cut off from the benefits they paid into. One, Professor Marjorie Griffin Cohen, said:

Going from making \$14 or \$15 an hour to making \$10.25, the minimum wage, makes a very huge difference for women. We see that this legislation will contribute to a low-wage policy, and already the vast majority of low-wage workers are women, so these policies will affect them. I would like the committee to understand that.

Last fall, I spoke with one of my constituents who came to Ottawa to protest peacefully on Parliament Hill against the government's inaction on climate change. She is in her sixties and had never participated in civil disobedience or been arrested, but she felt so strongly that Canada was going down the wrong path and that the government was not listening, she felt she had to do something, so she travelled to Ottawa to make her voice heard. This person is not a radical. Is it radical to believe that government policy should involve

public debate. In a democracy, this should be commonplace but the Conservatives are determined to shut down debate.

We have fought tooth and nail every step of the way to have debate on the bill. We will continue to do so. That is why we brought witnesses forward to the finance committee and subcommittee. That is why we held hearings across the country. We are trying to make it clear that we do not want the government to balance its books on the backs of seniors and to make clear that massive changes to EI should only come after a substantive debate.

We want to provide an opportunity for all Canadians to have their voices heard on this important bill which would have very real impacts on them now and on generations forward.

• (1250)

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know how hard my colleague from Parkdale—High Park works and how hard other members of the NDP as well as all opposition parties have worked on the bill at committee. They diligently and in total good faith tried to find a way to split the bill to ensure there would be overall examination.

Even yesterday, coming back from my riding, people were drawing to my attention various things in the bill that are still being discovered. There is still very little known about the changes.

One of the particular concerns I have is the change to the health care funding formula. As we know, the Conservatives unilaterally changed the health care funding formula to the provinces. This will have a huge impact on health care in the future in Canada. I wonder if the member could comment on that because I know it is an aspect of the bill that probably has not had the in-depth review and coverage that it needs to have, which is precisely why we needed to have much further examination of the bill.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right that in this massive omnibus bill of 753 clauses, one small part of it attempts to lock in the take-it-or-leave-it offer from the government to the provinces for the future of health care funding.

There will be increases to funding going forward, but over time they will continue to be less than the cost of inflation, less than growth, less than population growth. What we are going to see over time is like a noose around the neck of the provinces that will gradually squeeze them on health care costs.

Canadians are going to see the impact of this on their health care services. Will there be more privatization? Will more services be cut?

We think that this is a very dangerous step forward, and it has been done with a take-it-or-leave-it offer rather than through a collaborative approach of working with the provinces that deliver health care.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to this debate now for quite some time. What escapes my understanding is that this budget was tabled in the House in March, close to three months ago. I have just checked with the parliamentary secretary to my right, and the committee and subcommittee have held over 70 hours of meetings and have had over 100 witnesses come in front of committee. All I hear from the opposition is “process, process, process”.

The opposition members do not actually talk about what is in the budget, and that is the most important part. When Canadians look overseas and see what is happening in Europe, Spain, Greece and other countries, they are worried about jobs and the economy, and what is going to make our economy stronger is contained within the budget.

What do we not hear from the opposition? We do not hear what is actually in the budget to strengthen our economy.

Enough with the process. I would like the opposition members to talk about what is in the budget and how it will move Canada forward in terms of strengthening its economy.

• (1255)

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, there we have it. Suddenly democracy, this House and the public debate are dismissed as “process”.

I have to say how profoundly offensive that is, because we have, for example, changes that will result in people being in poverty or being forced onto welfare, and we have not had open discussion and debate. The government did not even talk to the Atlantic premiers before tabling these changes on EI, changes that will have a drastic impact on seasonal workers in those provinces.

To dismiss this as “process”, to me, is profoundly offensive. Democracy is what this House is about. It is not just about process. It is about what we do here and why we are elected.

I am proud to stand with my NDP colleagues and I will defend democracy. I will defend open debate. I defy any member of the Conservative Party to say otherwise, to say that we should not be defending democracy, parliamentary debate and open hearings with Canadians.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak at report stage on Bill C-38, a bill that many other colleagues in the House have accurately described as an affront to democracy.

I heard my hon. colleague say that somehow we, in the opposition benches, should speak to the content of the bill. I propose to do so, but I also must point out that it is the appropriate role of the Parliament of Canada to review legislation. It is not a mere process that gets in the way of the grand aims of the particular Conservative who is ruling Privy Council. The role of Parliament is, at its essence, to review legislation.

In this case we have before us a bill of over 420 pages repealing, amending and changing over 70 different laws. We now have before us hundreds of amendments grouped into 159 votes, but we know that this legislation will not receive adequate review.

I am going to direct my comments to those aspects of part 3 that are changed in Bill C-38, but I note that my amendments cover things that are changed in part 1 under the Income Tax Act, changed roles that are important, for instance, for the various agencies that are being ended, such as the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, which does not end up in part 3, which is generally reviewed as the environmental changes that are hidden within Bill C-38.

There are many changes within this legislation that will have long-term, serious and negative repercussions for Canada, for Canada's society and, yes, for Canada's economy. It is a false piece of rhetoric.

We have to beware. I do not like to be Biblical very often, but let us beware of the wages of spin. We are told a lot of spin in the House all the time, told that this is going to bring great jobs and prosperity. By asserting our rights to examine Bill C-38, we are not threatening the economy; we are trying to protect the integrity of Canadian institutions and our ability to forge policies that protect the environment and develop our resources at the same time.

In that light, I want to turn to some of the evidence we heard. I was not a member of the subcommittee on finance, but at its essence the repeal of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act is appalling. It has served Canada since 1993 and was working well up until these amendments, according to industry sources I have already cited in this House. We will repeal, under Bill C-38, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and we will see a whole new act in its place.

That new act, on the basis of expert evidence to the subcommittee on finance, will not work well. It will not work well for proponents who want to build projects. It will not work well for Canadians, who have an interest in the proceedings and wish to come forward to present their concerns. It will definitely not work well in respect to first nations and their inherent and treaty rights, which the federal government has an obligation, a fiduciary duty, to respect, as numerous court decisions make clear. As well, It will not work well for industry.

We have an entirely new scheme of legislation put forward without adequate review. We have had less than 14 hours of hearings, combined, on the changes to the Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act, the Species at Risk Act, the Navigable Waters Protection Act. I do not blame those in the legal departments who drafted this bill, clearly without adequate time and without adequate preparation. The drafters of Bill C-38 have taken a sledgehammer to environmental law and policy that have served this country well for decades, and that sledgehammer approach has left environmental law and policy in ruins.

I hope the Conservative members of Parliament will examine and consider voting in support of the amendments I have put forward today in order to make Bill C-38 serve the purpose they themselves say they want: to protect the environment while pursuing economic development.

*Government Orders*

In specific cases, the proposed co-called Canadian Assessment Act 2012 fails to define what environmental screening is. It fails to describe what an environmental assessment is. The Conservatives have done so much damage to the scheme of the legislation that they have created new chasms of uncertainty. Anyone who is about to do a project will not be able to tell from reading the new so-called CEAA 2012 what it will cover and what it will not cover.

I have heard the hon. members for Wellington—Halton Hills and Dufferin—Caledon call numerous times on the floor of the House for a federal review of the appalling megaquarry proposed for Melancthon Township, and I applaud them for doing so. However, if Bill C-38 passes, we should watch out. We would not want a federal review. That is the last thing we would want, because the only thing the environmental assessment panel would be able to examine would be the effect of the megaquarry on fish, marine plants and migratory birds.

• (1300)

The essence of the threat posed by the megaquarry is to the water table, to the surrounding farms and to the fertility of the soil, which is absolutely world-beating. No one can grow better potatoes than they do in the soils of that area of Melancthon County, yet if that megaquarry had a federal assessment, it would be restricted to looking at the impact on migratory birds and fish. It has the effect of a sledgehammer.

The witness I want to mention, whose testimony people can read in *Hansard*, is Stephen Hazell. He worked as a member of the legal staff of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and said exactly this: that this change will lead to greater uncertainty, more economic losses and mistakes that will cost us well into the future.

The same point was made by National Chief Shawn Atleo with the Assembly of First Nations. These changes will lead, in his words, to greater conflict, greater uncertainty, conflicts in the courts and conflicts in terms of direct action. If we are interested in democratic processes that respect all parts of society, this is not the way we want to go when we embark on large new projects.

The other pieces I must speak to in the limited time I have are my amendments, which attempt to repair the damage done by the sledgehammer to the Fisheries Act, particularly subsection 35(1). I know that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, in addressing the House numerous times, has claimed that the municipalities of Canada were clamouring for these changes so that when they installed various municipal works, they would not have to worry about whether there was a habitat for fish in the vicinity. That claim is belied by the vote last weekend in Saskatoon, when the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, representing hundreds of municipalities, passed a resolution on an emergency basis calling upon the Prime Minister to stop, rethink this and remove the Fisheries Act changes.

In the same tone, we have the words of four former fisheries ministers. I can mention their names in this place because they no longer sit among us. They are fine and honourable public servants. They are former fisheries minister Hon. Tom Siddon, the Hon. John Fraser, Hon. Herb Dhaliwal and Hon. David Anderson.

It is not just by chance that I stand here as the only leader of a federal political party from British Columbia. I note that those four

former fisheries ministers all hail from British Columbia, where people understand that wild salmon are as important to British Columbians as the French language is to Quebecers. It is part of who we are as British Columbians to defend our salmon when there could be changes that would allow the wholesale destruction of fish habitat that supports the sockeye, the endangered wild salmon runs and the coho. Why would we make changes in this place that would do such damage to the linchpin of environmental protection in Canada?

Subsection 35(1) of the Fisheries Act does not protect just a few fish. It is a fundamental piece of legislation and is part of federal jurisdiction in the Constitution that leads to the protection of fresh water. It leads to the protection of grizzly habitat, of forests and of ecosystems. Without subsection 35(1) of the Fisheries Act remaining intact, we open up the gangway to reckless destruction not only of our extraordinary natural resources but of nature itself.

We are constantly being told that we have a false choice, that we have to choose hell-bent-for-leather economic development with no attention to what it means to first nations rights and sustainability of natural capital. As I mentioned in the House before, we are told that the planet is a business in liquidation, and everything must go as quickly as possible.

I beg my Conservative colleagues in this place to reflect on the voices of their former colleagues, people like the former member of Parliament for Red Deer, Bob Mills, who pleaded that we keep the national round table, and people like the former fisheries ministers and scientists right across Canada. Report stage is the time to rescue Bill C-38 from being a bill that destroys the environment over the long term to one that respects it.

• (1305)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for her passionate plea. However, I would like to say on behalf of the government that this is not something that was put together at the last moment. This is something we have been working on for many years, so I would hope the member would take much of that into consideration.

However, I do have a couple of questions for my hon. colleague. First and foremost, she spoke at length about many of the environmental assessment measures, et cetera, but I am interested in knowing, on behalf of her riding, how she feels about the integrated cross-border law enforcement operations act. It is important to her riding. Her constituents are waiting to hear from her on this measure. Therefore, I would like her to address it. So far, it has been very well received from all the stakeholders.

The last question I would have for her is this. Is she considering a run for the Liberal leadership given that its members seem to have found their sea legs under her guidance and leadership? I am just curious to know if she has considered it.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I remind my hon. colleague across the way that this kind of approach, making these numerous changes under cover of a budget implementation bill, were once called by her own leader a backdoor way and a dangerous way of proceeding and would certainly not have the support of his party of the day. That was the current Prime Minister speaking in 1994.

I will say to all colleagues, and I know I have limited time for an answer, that I am grateful for the support of the Liberal Party for my motions. I do not for one minute suggest that I will be anything other than the leader of the Green Party of Canada, serving the interests of the voters of Saanich—Gulf Islands, and I believe that the so-called free rider provisions are an intrusion on Canadian sovereignty that should not be allowed.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her speech in defence of democracy and the environment.

It was interesting to hear the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance saying that the government had been working on these ideas for destroying environmental protections for years. I wonder whether you could comment on the timing and urgency now, because it seems to me that part of what this omnibus bill does is facilitate pipelines across northern British Columbia by removing the necessity of environmental assessments? Perhaps you could comment on whether you think the timing of this bill, since the Conservatives have been working on it for years, has some connection to pipelines?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. Before I go to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, I would like to remind all members to direct their comments and questions to the Chair rather than to their colleagues.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I was also surprised to hear the parliamentary secretary say the Conservatives have been working on these measures for years. Perhaps it was in some back room or some shadowy part of the House of Commons, but certainly not before committee and certainly not in any public, transparent or accountable fashion.

Of course, we became aware of the threat to the fisheries habitat through a leaked memo. Having had an alert from a former fisheries' biologist within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Otto Langer, whose concerns were reported in the media, I read the budget very carefully on March 29, in case there was anything there about proposed changes to section 35(1) of the Fisheries Act. It is not mentioned at all in the budget and is not part of a budgetary measure.

In answer to my friend, when we are looking at Bill C-38, I believe that many of the changes could have been written from within the corporate boardrooms of the oil industry, perhaps in Beijing as well as in Canada.

• (1310)

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on her speech and pick up on the theme that was raised by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

If indeed the government has been working on these changes for years, I am wondering if the member could help us understand why it is that just recently the government dispatched 10 senior cabinet ministers around the country to try to convince Canadians that the environmental assessment process would be capped to two years, only to then have to admit that in fact, when a project proponent delays, the two-year timeline no longer applies.

Maybe the member could help us understand, for example, how that applied in the case of Imperial Oil in the Northwest Territories.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has put the case very well. I will just say that most of the delays we have seen take place in the past, for instance, on large projects such as the review of the Mackenzie gas pipeline, were directly due to the proponent not being ready, and that has created delays.

A lot of us would like to see certainty around reviews, but we want to make sure the proponent cannot rag the puck so long that the process gets delayed and then those interested parties, and in a different category particularly, the first nations interested parties, have to rush to catch up with their analyses when the proponent is responsible for the delay.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, before talking about the clause I am asking to be deleted, I would like to congratulate the leader of the Green Party on the excellent speech she has just made. The Bloc Québécois joins in her argument and is entirely in agreement with her demands regarding this Bill C-38.

Clause 16, the elimination of which I am calling for in the amendment I am proposing, concerns the Governor General. It is unreasonable for the Governor General's salary to be doubled. About a month and a half ago, I introduced a motion in this House after discovering that the Governor General did not pay income tax. It is unreasonable for him to be the only person in Canada who pays no income tax, when the Queen of England pays tax, as do the governors general in the other Commonwealth countries.

The government agreed with my argument in the last budget: it decided to have him pay income tax. The great injustice is that it decided to double his salary because he is going to be paying income tax. I know of no one in this country, no working person, no member of the general public, who is getting their salary doubled all at once overnight. The government's argument is that it is going to double the Governor General's salary because he will be starting to pay income tax like all Canadians. That is absolutely ridiculous. His salary was \$137,000 and it is going up to \$270,000. The net salary will therefore be higher; that is unreasonable. His pension will also be higher.

*Government Orders*

The purpose of my motion was to remedy an injustice. Not only is it not being remedied, but a flagrant injustice is being created toward all members of the public, in both Quebec and Canada. Are there working people whose salaries have gone up by 100% in the last year? The government is making cuts everywhere: for seniors, unemployed workers and not-for-profit organizations. Would this not be an excellent opportunity for the government to put an end to this monarchy madness? However, doubling the Governor General's salary because he will be paying income tax in future is not the way to do it.

Note that the Governor General receives a pension equal to 100% of his salary after spending only five years in office. Is there any citizen or worker in Canada who receives that benefit? On average, Canadians work 35 years for a pension of approximately 75% of their salary. Note as well that this is merely an honorary position held for five years. During that term, the Governor General is clothed, transported, housed and fed. He enjoys unlimited international travel and then leaves office with a pension equal to 100% of his salary. He also has 160 people in his service and an annual budget of more than \$60 million in cooperation with six departments.

Let us consider the cost of the Senate. It comprises 104 senators and costs \$45 million, including staff and everything else. The House of Commons costs approximately \$200 million. And it will cost \$60 million for this person alone. Is it normal to attach so much importance to this position? I do not believe so.

This would be a good opportunity for the government to require the Governor General to pay income tax on the same salary, to put an end to this monarchy madness in which it has been engaging since the start of the year, and to consider the will of Quebecers and Canadians.

In fact, 80% of Quebecers and 50% of Canadians in the other provinces would like to sever ties with the monarchy.

●(1315)

I repeat: only 16 Commonwealth countries have maintained this link to the monarchy. It is time this government listened to the population. The Governor General must pay income tax; that is fine, but does it mean that we have to increase his salary by 100%? That is utterly ridiculous.

I do not believe the monarchy is equal to or synonymous with democracy—quite the contrary.

I am going to conclude by saying that, in addition to clause 6 of Bill C-38, which is completely unfair, we also disagree with a number of other provisions. This legislation affects 60 departments. For example, seniors will have to wait two additional years to receive their old age pensions. The changes to employment insurance were made without any consultation, without taking into account the reality of the regions.

The Bank Act is unfair to Quebec. The minister responsible, the federalist Liberal Quebec minister, is preparing to go before the courts. This will be the third or fourth time that the Quebec government has taken such action against this government. It is unacceptable for the federal government to be solely responsible for the Bank Act. It violates Quebec's Public Protector Act. As of 2016,

health transfers will be reduced, but there have been no consultations on this.

So, many measures were decided in haste, with few if any consultations, and are being imposed in a 460-page document. That is unusual. It is not normal. That way of doing things is unprecedented. It completely contradicts the spirit of British parliamentarianism which, after all, is one of the noblest forms of parliament among the major democracies. However, we must take the time to debate issues.

In conclusion, I hope that clause 16 will be abolished, or at least amended so that the Governor General's salary remains the same when, in 2013, he begins paying taxes just like every other Canadian.

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech, which sums up the Bloc Québécois's position on Bill C-38 very well.

I also want to ask him about his views on the proposed employment insurance reform. This reform is a direct attack on the regions, because it does not take into consideration the reality of seasonal workers in the forestry, tourism, fishery or agriculture sectors. The approach ignores the way the regional economy is structured. The bill attacks the regions by forcing workers to relocate over an hour away from their homes, and by forcing them to accept much lower wages, somewhere around 70% of their of their previous income.

I wonder if my colleague could elaborate on this issue.

●(1320)

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

During a press conference, he explained the consequences for the regions very well because he, himself, is from a region we would call "remote": the beautiful Gaspé. That is where this employment insurance reform would do harm. While this may be appropriate in an urban region, it seems that the government has in no way considered the consequences of this employment insurance reform on the maritime provinces, or on Quebec specifically.

I have been a member of Parliament for a long time, but I have rarely seen a bill that management and employees are both unanimously against. Not only does this bill destroy the economy, but it also destroys businesses built by families. For example, in the wood industry, in sawmills, workers are trained year after year, but we have winter in Canada, so these individuals are unemployed for a few months and then they return to work at the sawmill. If the workers who are trained to work at the sawmill are moved, that means that the sawmill will have to close and, if those workers have been moved elsewhere, they might not come back.

So there is a huge danger for the regions. This is a direct attack on those regions, and the government should change its position.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the concerns that have been raised by my colleague. If he has the statistics, the numbers, could he share them with the House?

*Government Orders*

About 28% of seasonal workers come from Atlantic Canada and close to 40% come from the province of Quebec. I know that those seasonal industries in Atlantic Canada contribute about 54% of the regional GDP, which is a significant part of the GDP of Atlantic Canada.

Could my colleague tell the House, even anecdotally or statistically, what component of the regional economy is drawn from seasonal industries because this budget would place those industries at risk?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, the statistics for the remote regions of Quebec are basically the same as those for the Atlantic provinces. In fact, this is the way it is when a region relies on a single industry, such as fishing or wood. Fishing cannot necessarily be done all year long, nor can wood be cut and processed year-round.

In that respect, it is absolutely tragic for the regions to see cuts being made to employment insurance, which ensures a distribution of wealth. In fact, let us not forget that the government does not pay for employment insurance; it is the employer and the employee who pay for it to provide against these months of unemployment until the regional economy improves thereby ensuring that workers are receiving an essential minimum income. If, however, the workers are sent outside the region, the immediate region will not receive any economic spinoffs during that short period of time.

Since my time is up, once again, I hope that the government will give more thought to the situation of unemployed workers in the regions.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate this opportunity to highlight some of the very important initiatives in the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act and to speak against the opposition amendments to delay this important legislation.

I listened intently this morning to a number of the speeches. I do have tremendous respect for democracy and tremendous respect for this place in which we all work. However, the suggestion by opposition members that democracy is in question here I refute completely and wholly. This is democracy. This is democracy in its finest hour because the government is defending democracy today.

My speech will address a number of things that defend democracy here today. Before I continue, as a member of the finance committee, I will acknowledge the detailed examination of this bill at committee stage. I will give all members the facts.

The finance committee and a special subcommittee, which is one of the first times we have ever seen a special subcommittee on a budget implementation bill, studied today's bill for nearly 70 hours. This is the longest consideration of budget legislation in decades. We heard from literally hundreds of individuals and organizations, from government officials, business leaders, academics, labour groups, industry associations and countless others.

● (1325)

[*Translation*]

The bill we are debating today positions Canada for economic prosperity, job creation and long-term fiscal health. It is designed to create a climate for private sector investment, innovation and opportunity.

It is crucial that Canada achieve its economic potential so that it can weather another period of global economic uncertainty. The economic upheaval abroad is bound to have an impact on our economy. Even though we must not underestimate the risks, Canadians can be sure that their country is in a good position to face the challenges posed by the global economic situation, as it has done in the past. To that end, we will continue to focus on measures that will keep Canada as competitive as possible during this time of economic uncertainty.

I am convinced that the bill before us today is a blueprint for a strong, prosperous Canada.

[*English*]

Having said all of that, I will now talk about how today's bill builds on Canada's commitment to make us more competitive in the future by removing red tape and bureaucratic obstacles.

As a trading nation, we understand how important an efficient border is to Canadians and our economy. Canada, like many other countries, provides residents returning from abroad with a personal exemption from duties and taxes for goods purchased up to a certain dollar value. Some of these exemption limits for Canadians have remained the same for many years. Given the considerable amount of travel that Canadians undertake every year, it makes sense to update these limits, as consumer groups have long requested.

Effective June 1, 2012, residents returning to Canada after being out of the country for 24 hours or more are exempt from duties and taxes on up to \$200 of goods they purchase abroad. The exemption limit for those returning after at least 48 hours abroad has also been raised to \$800.

These changes would reduce red tape for travellers who bring in goods within the new exemption limits and make it that much easier for Canadian residents returning home to complete the customs process. More important, these exemptions are exactly the same exemptions the Americans have when they shop here in Canada and return home. Consistency means efficiency. Our government understands how important an efficient border is to Canadians and to our economy.

These new exemption limits would expedite customs clearance for returning Canadian consumers, making cross-border business and personal travel more convenient for Canadians.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

To facilitate access to Canadian tourist destinations, Bill C-38 will also eliminate or reduce the taxes on foreign-based rental vehicles temporarily imported by Canadian residents.

Before these changes were announced in Canada's economic action plan, foreign-registered rental vehicles that were temporarily imported by Canadian residents were usually subject at the border to GST on the full value of the vehicle, the green levy and the automobile air conditioner tax.

Until recently, this type of import was prohibited by federal vehicle safety rules, unless the vehicle in question was proven to comply with all Canadian standards.

Rental vehicles temporarily imported by foreign tourists visiting Canada are generally not subject to any taxes or similar restrictions.

In other words, the bill we are discussing today will eliminate or reduce the taxes on foreign-based rental vehicles temporarily imported by Canadian residents and, consequently, will make it easier to access Canadian tourist destinations. That is a good thing.

[English]

As households across this country understand, ensuring prosperity also means being responsible in how we treat every dollar.

Canadians know the importance of living within their means and they expect the government to do the same. For example, today's legislation would modernize Canada's current system by eliminating the penny from Canada's coinage system. Over time, inflation has eroded the purchasing power of the penny and multiplied its manufacturing costs. Until penny production was halted recently, it cost taxpayers 1.6¢ every time we made a penny. For businesses, the time and cost of processing pennies has increased, taking them away from the task of growing their businesses and creating jobs.

Other countries, such as New Zealand, Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland and Sweden, have made smooth transitions to a penny free economy. The government expects that businesses will apply rounding for cash transactions in a fair and transparent manner. Canadians can rest assured that they will be able to redeem pennies for full value.

As consumers and businesses begin to rely less and less on the penny in their day-to-day lives, we hope that all Canadians will consider putting their last pennies to good use by donating them to charity. Eliminating the penny from Canada's coinage system will ensure that the Canadian currency system remains efficient and responsive to the needs of consumers, businesses and the economy.

● (1330)

[Translation]

We are also proposing to simplify administrative formalities as we strengthen our immigration system.

The jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act supports the government's commitment to better focus our immigration system on our economic objectives with the following three measures.

First, we are going to return applications to some of the applicants to the federal skilled workers program and refund as much as

\$130 million in fees. This will shorten the backlog in processing applications in the Canadian immigration system and will allow us to focus our efforts on responding to the real needs of the job market.

Second, we are going to work with the provinces, the territories and other stakeholders to further improve foreign credential recognition and to identify the next set of target occupations beyond 2012. This will help highly qualified new arrivals to find work in the area for which they have been trained and to contribute quickly to the Canadian economy.

Finally, we will continue to study other ways to improve the temporary foreign worker program in order to support economic growth and recovery and to make the program correspond better to the requirements of the job market.

[English]

From the countless hours of testimony we heard before the finance committee, I recall the comments of Richard Kurland, noted immigration policy analyst and attorney who told us:

I feel the government is doing the right thing. This is the right solution for a problem that has been plaguing this country for over 25 years. It is the first time it's being fixed.

The door is not shut; it's just that those are no longer the skills we need.

All of these measures would help to ensure that the Canadian economy continues to move in the right direction. We must take these actions in order to respond to the challenges of today while setting out a plan that our long-term goals demand.

I, therefore, urge all hon. members in this House to please take the work of the finance committee and the subcommittee to heart. This is a good bill that would move Canada forward. It would secure jobs, secure long-term prosperity and secure our economic growth.

I implore members from the opposite side to stop arguing about process, to look at the content, to see that it is good for Canadians and to vote in favour of moving this forward.

[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her remarks.

In her opening comments, she claimed that members on this side of the House do not respect democracy. I must point out to her that democracy is not about passing a bill in haste or about saying to other hon. members, "Too bad—we have a majority".

But let us talk about the economy. They claim that Bill C-38 will help the economy. Tourism is very important where I come from. Not only will it be affected by the changes to employment insurance, but Parks Canada services are also going to be cut. That will prevent Fort Chambly from providing the same level of service that it previously provided. Fort Chambly is one of the most frequently visited Parks Canada sites in Quebec. In spite of that, services are going to be cut, and the quality of tourism services in the region is going to be lowered, which in turn will have a negative impact on the region.



*Government Orders*

How will this contribute to economic prosperity and job creation?

• (1335)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question. He touched on a number of issues in his question.

First, I would like to talk about the democracy he mentioned. Democracy is alive and well here in the House of Commons, but when one single NDP member took several days in the House to debate this bill when it was first introduced, leaving only a few minutes for the Liberal Party to respond and no time for other, independent members to raise any objections, I also wonder if the delay amounts to nothing more than a filibuster.

Is that what the hon. member really thinks democracy is? Frankly, the delays are a real obstacle.

In terms of tourism, I just talked about rental vehicles. For some time now, the hon. member for Yukon has talked about the challenge of bringing rental vehicles to Yukon to allow tourists to visit Yukon and the Canadian north. And now we have a provision in this bill to address that situation, a measure that will help us in the tourism sector.

[*English*]

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to attend the budget implementation act technical briefing. This was an opportunity for all members and their staff to ask questions with regard to all the amendments and so on that were taking place on the bill. We found that people realized that any of the major questions and concerns that were being raised were of a political nature and certainly not a technical nature.

One example had to do with the integrated cross-border law enforcement operations act. Just a few moments ago, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands indicated that she did not approve of this particular clause.

My question is for the parliamentary secretary. Who was consulted in the development of the act and why is it such an important measure?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Red Deer for the incredible work he does, not only in his riding, but in the House of Commons. He has been instrumental in helping us with the bill.

I want to address this very important clause in the bill. I was disappointed to hear the member from the Green Party say that she was not in favour. Let me list the stakeholders that were consulted. We consulted provincial attorneys general, police associations, local governments and aboriginal groups in close proximity to the border. We spoke with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Association of Police Forces, the Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, the Canadian Bar Association, the Barreau du Québec, the Canadian Council of Criminal Defence Lawyers, et cetera. We spent an enormous amount of time trying to ensure we got this right.

I would have thought we would have at least had support from the opposition parties when we look at legislation that would actually allow us to collaborate with our U.S. counterparts in the area of law

enforcement, ensuring we restrict contraband from being smuggled into our country.

A pilot project also ran and something like 1.4 million contraband cigarettes were seized during that project. A child abduction was solved as a result of the pilot project.

Therefore, this is a good measure on which I would have anticipated support from all members. It is unfortunate that the member from the Green Party does not support it. I know her riding members certainly seem to support it.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to discuss some of the provisions in Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, and to explain why we must not let the New Democrats and the other opposition parties delay its passage.

As the Conservative government said very clearly, since 2006, our focus has been on the economy. As we have all noticed, we are on the right track in terms of jobs and growth. In many ways, Canada has done well despite the global uncertainty. For example, almost 760,000 jobs have been created since July 2009. That is the strongest job creation record in the G7.

[*English*]

The IMF and OECD both project that Canada will have among the strongest growth in the G7. For the fourth straight year, the World Economic Forum rated our banking system the world's best. *Forbes* magazine ranked Canada as the best place for businesses to grow and create jobs. Canada also has the best fiscal position in the G7 by far. Canada also has the lowest overall tax rate on new business investment in the G7.

In the words of respected financial analyst and commentator, Camilla Sutton, of Scotiabank, “the long-term story for Canada on a relative basis is still a very, very good one. There's very few other places I'd rather be than Canada...when it comes to these uncertain times, Canada holds its own and shines”.

However, we all know that global economic recovery remains fragile, especially in Europe. That is why we are focused on jobs, the economy and implementing economic action plan 2012 through Bill C-38. As successful as our past has been, we must stay focused on the present and the future. The economy must remain at the forefront of our priorities. It is the right thing to do.

[*Translation*]

The well-being of Canadians depends on a healthy economy. The well-being of my constituents of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell depends on a healthy economy.

A strong economy makes it possible for all Canadians to benefit from growth and long-term prosperity. By making sensible and responsible decisions today, we will provide everyone with a better standard of living tomorrow.

*Government Orders*

That is the goal that the Conservative government has set for itself with this bill. And that is why it is so important to move forward with this bill today, and not allow the New Democrats and the other opposition parties to delay its passage with their stalling tactics.

[English]

In my remarks today, I would like to focus on a few of the measures in Bill C-38 that would help strengthen Canada's housing sector.

The housing sector is one of the most important pieces of our economy. In my riding, certain towns like Clarence-Rockland have seen tremendous growth. Local businesses are benefiting. The local economy is benefiting. For that to continue, there is a real need for new families to choose housing in these communities. We can all agree that the housing market requires ongoing stability and close monitoring.

For most Canadian families, the biggest investment we make in our lifetimes is the purchase of a home. Families will not buy if they think the housing market is unstable. Ensuring that such an investment is secure is the responsible thing to do. That is why our government regularly monitors housing finance risks and takes action when necessary.

For example, we have adjusted the rules for government-backed insured mortgages recently on multiple occasions. In addition, in June 2011, Parliament approved legislation to formalize arrangements with private mortgage insurers and Canada Mortgage and Housing, CMHC, in an effort to better manage risks arising from the mortgage insurance sector.

[Translation]

Now, as part of the Conservative government's ongoing efforts to strengthen the mortgage sector, we are proposing amendments in today's bill that will reinforce supervision of CMHC and guarantee that its commercial activities are managed with a view to promoting the stability of the financial system.

Specifically, the amendments include the following: an additional objective for CMHC of ensuring that its commercial activities promote and contribute to the stability of the financial system, including the housing market; legislative and regulatory powers given to the Minister of Finance in respect of CMHC's securitization programs; powers given to the Superintendent of Financial Institutions to review and monitor the safety and soundness of CMHC's commercial activities and to report to the CMHC board of directors and HRSDC; and the addition of the deputy minister of human resources and skills development and the deputy minister of finance as ex-officio members of CMHC's board of directors.

● (1345)

[English]

We believe these amendments would contribute to the long-term stability of the housing market and would benefit all Canadians. We have heard a great deal of positive reaction.

Louis Gagnon, a professor at Queen's University, stated:

I believe that the federal government's plan to bring CMHC under the direct supervision of the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions is long overdue.

OSFI is responsible for the oversight of insurance companies and it only makes sense to bring CMHC under its purview, since CMHC is the most systematically important insurance entity in the land and also the most vulnerable one.

This is what the respected Finn Poschmann, vice-president of the C.D. Howe Institute, said:

...the legislation will require at least annual inspections from OSFI, with reports to the board and the responsible ministers. Formalizing the requirement in legislation could do wonders for reporting and accountability, and will help the board and management reassure themselves that CMHC is carrying out its activities... "in a safe and sound manner ... with due regard to its exposure to loss." This is good...

Before concluding, I will turn my attention to the health sector where we are proposing changes to the tax treatment of certain health related goods and services. Health care is very important to the people of my riding, as it is to people across Canada. As a father of five children, I know very well how easily the costs add up when someone is affected by illness. The more our government can do to alleviate these costs during these stressful periods the better.

[Translation]

These changes will better reflect the changing nature of the health sector and will acknowledge the impact of the expenses related to health and disability that Canadians encounter for their own care or that of their loved ones.

For example, we are proposing to remove the GST from the professional services of pharmacists beyond those related to dispensing prescription drugs, which are already tax exempt.

[English]

We also propose to expand the list of health care professionals who can order certain medical and assistive devices that are zero rated under the GST. This reflects the increasing involvement of health care professionals, such as nurses, in giving orders for these devices. We also propose to expand the list of GST zero rated medical and assistive devices and the list of expenses an individual may claim for income tax purposes under the medical expense tax credit.

These measures represent a simple, thoughtful and appropriate way to ensure that our tax system remains fair and up to date.

I note that during the finance committee's study of today's act, the Canadian Medical Association voiced its support for the measures that I have just mentioned.

Today's act would accomplish a great deal for Canadians and it contains a host of other measures that deserve my colleagues' attention. As an example, today's act would take the first step toward making important improvements to the registered disability savings plan, or RDSP, by allowing spouses, common-law partners and parents to establish an RDSP for adult individuals who might not be able to enter into a contract themselves.

[Translation]

It has been my pleasure to highlight some of the key measures recently proposed by the Conservative government to keep the country on the path to growth and prosperity.

*Government Orders*

Now it is important that we work together and continue to cooperate for the good of Canada and Canadians. The measures in today's bill are necessary and will have lasting benefits.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague represents a mostly rural riding with many farmers. I would like to know whether he has had the chance to talk to his constituents, especially those in the agricultural sector, about the changes to employment insurance.

I ask him the question because I have talked to the farmers in my riding. I can say that they are infuriated over the changes. In my riding, as in his I am sure, agriculture provides seasonal employment. The people in my riding see the employment insurance provisions as an obstacle to seasonal employment and a headache for the farmers, as businesspeople who need to retain their workforce.

Has my colleague consulted with farmers to see what they think about this?

• (1350)

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, as a member for an agricultural region and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, I naturally work closely with the farmers in my riding and all across Canada. It has to be said that farmers support our efforts to strengthen the Canadian economy.

[*English*]

Farmers thrive in a healthy economy. They have enough challenges in front of them without also having economic instability. They see that our measures with respect to employment insurance would help Canadians find work. They are particularly concerned about this because they have problems finding help on their farms. They must go to the extraordinary measures of bringing people in from outside of Canada to work on their farms. They would much rather employ people right here within Canada on their farms. These EI measures would help in that regard.

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, twice now the government has brought in a new fisheries act to change the existing Fisheries Act. Twice it has been sent back to the drawing board to come back with another act. In two throne speeches it has promised a new fisheries act but has not lived up to those commitments. It has now jammed the fisheries legislation into this bill.

Why will the government not have a separate debate on the Fisheries Act itself? Twice in its throne speeches the government was going to bring in a new fisheries act and now it has jammed it into the budget bill.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, I would invite my opposition colleagues to work with the mayors in small rural communities, such as mine, and in other rural communities across Canada. They would then hear feedback from the mayors who are trying to maintain the infrastructure within their ridings and yet it is far more costly, far more time demanding and requires more resources because the way in which the Fisheries Act is currently written is employed within small rural communities.

I believe the fisheries minister has his focus right, which is focusing on Canada's fish stock and fish resources and ensuring that we do whatever is possible to protect those resources without compromising what our rural municipalities are trying to achieve.

**Ms. Candice Hooppner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just got off the phone half an hour ago with one of my constituents, Doug Dobrowolski, who is a farmer, a businessman and the president of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. He represents hundreds of mayors, reeves and councillors who have been asking our government, since I have been elected and before that, to change the Fisheries Act in order that it is not punitive to small towns and farmers who are trying to dig ditches and culverts.

It seems that the opposition is always ignoring the needs of rural Canada and putting its needs first. I think it is time that we all realize that we can balance the interests of rural Canadians, protect our fish habitat and do what is good for the country and good for the economy. Would my hon. colleague comment on that?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to comment on that because my colleague is absolutely right. I am from a rural riding myself. My mayors for the past six years have been pressuring me on the difficulties and the challenges they face in maintaining rural infrastructure. What my colleague just said in terms of a discussion that she has had with one of her mayors, it is the same discussion I am having with my mayors. They are asking us to simply find a balance that would allow them to fulfill their responsibilities in a cost-effective and time-effective manner. I believe that this review of the Fisheries Act conducted by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is exactly what Canada needs.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to be able to say that I am pleased to be rising in this House, but that would not be entirely true given our current topic of debate, which is, of course, Bill C-38, the budget implementation bill.

I have heard Conservative members say again and again, and even a moment ago, in the House, in committees and during the first debates we held, that this bill is a marvel and absolutely must be passed for the sake of prosperity, jobs and so on. As a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and the official opposition's assistant finance critic, I can tell you that nothing could be further from the truth.

*Statements by Members*

This is a very harmful bill. Based on our reading of it, the bill is nothing more or less than an attack on the middle class and less well-off families. It is obvious in several respects that many provisions of this bill have been inserted specifically to put downward pressure on Canadians' wages. Consequently, it is not Canadians who will benefit from it. It will probably be the business world as a whole, which will benefit from declining wages and the competition among a larger pool of unemployed or low-income individuals on which it can draw.

What are those provisions? There are a few. There is obviously division 23 of part 4, which repeals the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act. That act established wages that, as its title indicated, were fair for employees, particularly in the construction industry. There are also provisions concerning the Employment Equity Act. The bill will remove employment equity requirements and thus represents a step backward in its approach to companies doing business, that is to say subcontracting, with the government. And there is obviously the issue of employment insurance.

I know my colleagues will definitely be discussing a lot of other provisions in the bill, particularly the increase in the age of eligibility for old age security from 65 to 67, immigration issues and other questions. We have a mammoth bill on our hands, as has been noted many times in the media, but I will limit myself to those three elements for the purposes of my speech.

What people need to realize is that the budget was presented in March and it has passed, although the government would have people believe that this budget implementation bill is the budget. The budget has already passed and it was an austerity budget. With \$5.2 billion in cuts, it will have a rather significant impact. Not only is it an austerity budget, but it will clearly have recessionary consequences.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer stated his opinion in that regard and other economists have confirmed his opinion. This shows that the direction this government is taking will prevent us from reaching our economic growth potential, which could help us create many jobs. This austerity budget, which has been criticized by two major rating agencies, Fitch and Moody's, represents a huge economic blow delivered by this government to Quebec and Canadian companies.

Based on his own modelling, the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that this budget could possibly cost more than 100,000 jobs by 2015-16, although those jobs can be saved if we are really careful, given that we are currently in a period of economic uncertainty. However, we are not Greece or any of the other countries currently affected by the crisis in Europe. Our reality is altogether different. Yes, we are experiencing some economic uncertainty and we need to be careful, but on the other hand, our problem is quite different from that in Europe.

I find employment insurance very interesting. I know that I only have a minute, but I could probably talk much more about this topic. So, that is a problem. I have spoken with many of my constituents, and those who are most affected are not necessarily the employees themselves—although they will be affected—but it will be the employers. For them, seasonal work is a reality. They have no other choice. That is the case with controlled harvesting zones or with

companies that must shut down two or three months out of the year for various reasons, such as that cabinetmaking company in Saint-Jean-de-Dieu. These people fear losing their workforce. A business owner was even worried about the fact that she might have to pay employees to do nothing for two or three months in order to keep them.

• (1355)

I will stop here for now, and I will continue my speech about employment insurance later.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

### JOBS, GROWTH AND LONG-TERM PROSPERITY ACT

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives tried to seduce Quebecers by making promises about an open federalism that would respect their differences, but now the only federalism Quebecers are seeing is fraught with contempt and arrogance.

The Conservatives with Bill C-38 are like pyromaniacs with a can of gas. They are torching relations with Quebec, in particular by exempting major banks from consumer protection requirements; trampling on the Kyoto protocol; reducing health care funding even though our population is aging; and proposing employment insurance reforms that, quite frankly, will harshly penalize workers, employers and the regions of Quebec.

While the Government of Quebec is stepping up its legal recourse to ensure its rights are respected, the federal government insists on saying that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Quebecers will not put up with being treated with contempt.

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• (1400)

[*English*]

### NATURE CONSERVATION

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently announced the creation of a new hunting and angling advisory panel, HAAP, that will provide independent advice to the Government of Canada on national issues and policies important to fish, wildlife and habitat conservation in Canada.

It is made up of representatives from provincial and territorial hunting and angling associations and conservation organizations.

*Statements by Members*

As co-chair of the all-party outdoors caucus, I am pleased to see HAAP become a reality. The outdoors caucus strives to promote fishing, hunting, trapping and sport shooting as safe and healthy outdoor heritage activities. HAAP will help to increase awareness of the economic importance of Canada's outdoor heritage while ensuring that government decisions on matters such as wetland protection, endangered species and nature conservation are based on sound, balanced advice.

In my riding of Yorkton—Melville, where there is an abundance of wetlands and wildlife, HAAP is welcome news, and I am very “HAAPy” that this government has pushed ahead with this important conservation initiative.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**YOUTH**

**Ms. Nicole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, I have had the pleasure of meeting hundreds of young people in my constituency, young people who have distinguished themselves through their excellence, their leadership and their involvement in our communities.

I applaud the 75 young people from all over Quebec who took part in the Sommet québécois Rio+20 de la jeunesse that was held at Collège Saint-Joseph in Hull. The statement they developed together will be presented to the Earth Summit in Brazil at the end of June.

Their statement offers solutions for the present and future challenges faced by our planet and lists the values that they wish to see Canada support at the summit.

I would also like to congratulate the winners and the nominees recognized at the awards gala of the Réseau du Sport étudiant du Québec en Outaouais. The personal commitment of these student athletes is outstanding.

Young people are the future of our country. By getting them involved in our communities, we help to shape the leaders of tomorrow.

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[English]

**TAX INCENTIVES FOR CHARITABLE DONATIONS**

**Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, charities are vital to the well-being of our society, and all members of Parliament can attest to the positive impact charities have in each of our communities.

I believe it is important that our government work closely with charities and collaborate with national organizations such as Imagine Canada and Community Foundations of Canada to ensure that the charitable sector continues to be effective and sustainable and responsive to our changing society.

As a result of my private member's motion, the finance committee is engaged in a study of the charitable sector, looking at ways to motivate increased giving. Witnesses are providing insight into the challenges faced by the sector and offering innovative ideas to capitalize on future opportunities.

I look forward to seeing the results of this important study and to advancing our collective efforts to build a more caring and compassionate society.

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**ANIMAL WELFARE**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is disturbing to read stories about animal abuse in Canada.

Animals are, for millions of Canadians, an essential component of family life, forming special bonds that are valued and endearing.

Whether it is a seeing eye dog or a German shepherd providing services to our military and police forces, animals are valuable, loyal and dedicated. What they ask for in return is little.

Just recently we have learned how important dogs have become in support of our returning veterans, providing many of them with companionship in difficult times.

Former MP Mark Holland and the hon. member for Vancouver Centre have both attempted to strengthen animal protections by introducing legislation that would modernize laws against intentional cruelty and neglect.

Parliament must do more to protect animals.

I want to recognize community workers and humane societies throughout Canada, including Kelly Mullaly from the P.E.I. Humane Society, for giving a voice to animals.

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● (1405)

**100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**

**Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that three communities, Avonlea, Briercrest and the Rural Municipality of Baidon, will celebrate their 100th anniversary this summer. They deserve to be proud of their progress since the first settlers broke ground, planted their first crops and made their homes adjacent to the railroad.

Hundreds of residents and visitors are expected to gather over the Canada Day weekend in Avonlea and Briercrest. Residents of Baidon will celebrate on August 4. Community volunteers are to be commended for their efforts in putting together these celebrations, which promise to be events to be remembered. It is truly the passion of residents that makes small communities a great place to live and visit.

I offer my congratulations to the residents of Avonlea, Briercrest and the Rural Municipality of Baidon for reaching this milestone and wish them all the best over the next 100 years. I ask all members of the House to wish these communities a very special 100th birthday.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**POVERTY**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, dozens of Rosemont residents will meet to work together to change their neighbourhood. They will set up committees with representatives from community organizations to work on the seven priorities determined by the whole neighbourhood during an extraordinary citizen action process. A similar process is also taking place in La Petite-Patrie. On May 12, the Rosemont community development corporation held a major social forum.

I would like to inform members of the House that the hundreds of people who participated in the forum identified two main priorities: housing and food security.

The fact is that in Rosemont, a central Montreal neighbourhood, hundreds of families do not have access to decent housing and rely on food banks. The people have made it clear that fighting poverty is a priority.

As a New Democrat, I am in full agreement with their view. Ensuring that every person in Canada has access to healthful food and decent housing is an urgent matter.

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[English]

**BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, conservationists, not just Conservatives, are supporting Bill C-38, the budget implementation act.

First, the bill would eliminate needless duplication of proceedings by government. The targeted inefficiencies include overlapping reviews by federal and provincial governments that do nothing to protect fisheries but interfere with jobs and economic growth.

Second, the bill would correct problems with the current habitat protection program: by clearing up uncertainty; defining more clearly what “important habitat” is; and focusing resources of the fisheries department on areas about which Canadians really care. The bill would address these faults with clearer definitions of fish habitat and stiffer penalties for offenders. The bill would also grant the minister increased flexibility to respond to the particular needs of each province.

As we approach Canada Day, I am grateful to live in the most beautiful place on earth, with such abundant resources and people who care so passionately about the legacy, environmental and economic, that we are committed to leave to our children.

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**NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR WEEK**

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate National Blood Donor Week, which is taking place between June 11 and 17. This annual event recognizes the valuable contributions of Canadian blood donors to the health and well-being of us all.

Every minute of every day a Canadian requires a blood transfusion. An estimated 52% of Canadians have indicated that either they or a family member has required a blood transfusion. These statistics underline the need to give thanks and appreciation to Canadians who take the time to donate their blood to anonymous strangers. Additionally, Canadian Blood Services also provides blood for members of our Canadian Forces serving overseas.

I hope this week will encourage many more Canadians to donate blood and promote awareness of this noble practice to their friends, families and colleagues.

On behalf of my constituents in Oakville and the Government of Canada, I wish Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec a successful blood drive and increased awareness on the occasion of this year's National Blood Donor Week.

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[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the opening of the Baie-des-Brises nature preserve in Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka, in my riding. Thanks to the efforts of the Centre d'intendance écologique Latreille, and specifically its founder, Dr. Jean-Marie Latreille, this reserve will act as a purifier for the water of Lac Saint-François and will protect the ecosystem that helps preserve the quality of the water in the lake and the water table.

Now more than ever, we need to mobilize Canadians to protect our rivers, lakes and streams because this government has weakened all the environmental protection measures.

The government is eliminating the protection of habitats covered under the Fisheries Act, limiting the number of waterways protected by that same act and by the Species at Risk Act. It is repealing the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which will make even more areas vulnerable and will give the minister the authority to make decisions on oil pipeline projects.

For every step forward for environmental protection, this Conservative government takes four steps back.

Fortunately, there is hope with people like Dr. Latreille, who believe in the need to preserve nature's beauty and benefits for future generations.

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●(1410)

[English]

**BURMA**

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is concerned by reports of violence in Rakhine state in western Burma, where a state of emergency was declared this past weekend.

We condemn the attacks and call on all sides to work toward a peaceful solution to this conflict. We urge security forces to protect the rights and safety of all concerned and to facilitate access by humanitarian organizations wherever assistance is needed.

Canada has consistently called for peace and reconciliation in Burma.

[*Translation*]

In light of the most recent events, Canada has updated its advice to travellers wanting to visit Burma and is now asking them to avoid all non-essential travel to Rakhine State. Canadians in Burma can get consular assistance from the Australian embassy in Rangoon or the Canadian embassy in Bangkok, Thailand.

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#### CITY OF SAINT-EUSTACHE

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 40 years ago, in 1972, the city and parish of Saint-Eustache amalgamated to become a single entity.

In order to acknowledge the important contribution made by the seniors of Saint-Eustache, a founders ball is being planned for August 25.

I would like to congratulate Johanne Dupuis of the Les Cours du Moulin retirement residence and the city's community leadership service on this wonderful initiative to highlight our heritage.

The first mayor of the amalgamated city, Guy Bélisle, will lead the celebration, which will also serve as a fundraiser for the Fondation Émile-Z-Laviolette, a foundation that supports various anti-poverty organizations in the Deux-Montagnes RCM.

The people of Saint-Eustache are fortunate to live in a city that is so rich in culture and history.

I invite all my constituents to take part in this event in order to pay tribute to the founders of Saint-Eustache and to celebrate our city.

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[*English*]

#### YAD VASHEM HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

**Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express the Canadian government's solidarity with the people of Israel and the Jewish community around the world after this morning's reports of vandalism at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

The Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum is dedicated to the commemoration of the six million Jews murdered during World War II.

The mission of Yad Vashem is in line with our government's belief in the importance of Holocaust education and dedication to speaking out against anti-Semitism. Holocaust education helps ensure such atrocities never reoccur.

An important expression of Canada's dedication to Holocaust education is our involvement with the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, which we will proudly chair in 2013.

Canada is committed to teaching future generations about the Holocaust, about the poisonous effects of anti-Semitic and xenophobic hatred and about the prevention of all acts of genocide.

#### *Statements by Members*

#### ONTARIO VETERINARY COLLEGE

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, founded in 1862 by Andrew Smith, the Ontario Veterinary College is the oldest veterinary college in North America and celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. Originally located in Toronto, it relocated to its present home in 1922 and was a founding college of the University of Guelph in 1964.

The college was initially founded to train and assist people in Upper Canada who were responsible for horses. Now it has grown to become an international leader in veterinary health care, learning and research.

The OVC is a cornerstone of the community in Guelph. More than a landmark physical institution, it has been the home for the past 150 years to thousands of men and women who have gone on to graduate and spread out across Canada and the world to improve the health and welfare of animals, ensure the safety of the food we eat and assist in the protection of our environment.

I am certain that 150 years from now, Guelphites will reflect on the ever-increasing and important role the Ontario Veterinary College will have played on its 300th anniversary.

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● (1415)

#### THE ECONOMY

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives reject NDP and Liberal calls to use Canadian taxpayer money to bail Europe out of its debt crisis. The opposition needs to explain to Canadians why their hard-earned money should go to the IMF to bail out European countries that have borrowed to the brink.

Economic experts agree. Professor Stephen Gordon, one of Canada's preeminent economists, said that the Prime Minister was right to dismiss the IMF's calls for Canadians to fund the bailout. Harvard's Ken Rogoff, a former IMF economist, agrees Canada should not participate in an IMF bailout.

Unlike the opposition, our Conservative government will not adopt the same fiscally reckless policies that exacerbated the debt crisis in Europe. We have a plan to balance our books, while securing the long-term prosperity of our country. Indeed, Canada's economy is creating jobs and is home to one of the world's most stable financial sectors.

Canadian taxpayers should not be penalized by debt-focused fiscal policies of European countries. They should not be on the hook for Europe's unsustainable accumulation of debt. This is Europe's debt problem and it needs to fix it.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a budget bill is not a catch-all that the government can stuff with whatever it wants, yet the Conservatives' Trojan Horse makes cuts everywhere: employment insurance, fisheries, pensions, science, the environment, immigration, and the list goes on.

No one is safe when the Conservatives get out their chainsaw, but the people of this country are not fools. They see everything the government is trying to make them swallow in this ill-considered bill. They hear bones cracking when the Prime Minister twists his backbenchers' arms to make them accept the unacceptable. And most importantly, they know that more and more of their fellow Canadians from one end of the country to the other feel that the Conservatives are going too far, that they are trying to pull the wool over Canadians' eyes with this shoddy, hasty process, and that enough is enough.

They that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind, and the whirlwind is upon them.

When Conservative premiers, former Conservative ministers and even Conservative backbenchers all voice their opposition to a bill, this government is clearly going in the wrong direction.

This irresponsible government does not seem to realize that this whirlwind could turn into a hurricane that will cost it dearly in 2015.

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*[English]***ORGAN DONATION**

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, late last year the House engaged in a debate regarding organ donation. Today, more than six months later, there are still about 4,000 Canadians in need of an organ transplant.

Last year I shared how Betty's final gift saved five lives. We discussed this last year after our friend Garry Kellar shared publicly his need for a new kidney.

I am pleased to inform the House that our prayers were answered. Last week Garry received a new kidney from a live donor. He is recovering well and maintains his sense of humour.

I challenge hon. members to encourage their constituents to register as organ donors. In Ontario, people can register at [beadonor.ca](http://beadonor.ca).

On behalf of the House, on behalf of Garry and his wife Anna and on behalf of the 4,000 Canadians still in need of a transplant, I thank the donor who saved Garry and all Canadians who have taken the time to discuss organ donation with their loved ones. God bless them all.

**ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' Trojan Horse budget will slash vital public services that Canadians rely on: food inspections, border security, research and development, housing, health care, employment insurance, old age security. The list goes on and on.

The Conservatives cannot even tell Parliament the details of their own proposals or how much they will cost. If the Conservatives are so proud of all these cuts, why are they hiding them? Why are they ramming them through? If they are so good, why not study them?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has been focused on the economy and on job creation, and doing that in the short term and the long term. As a result of our economic action plans, consistently opposed by the NDP, we have delivered for Canadians over 760,000 net new jobs so far.

Economic action plan 2012 continues on that path. It is a comprehensive plan to ensure our economic security through job creation, economic growth and indeed through balancing the budget so that we do not go down the path that we see in Europe, where the hon. Leader of the Opposition is suggesting we send Canadians' billions in order to bail out Spanish and Greek banks.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will say it every time. That is an utter fabrication.

In addition to all of these cuts and services to the public, Conservatives are carrying out an unprecedented attack on oversight and accountability in all sectors, slashing environmental assessments, gutting the Fisheries Act, cutting back on air safety, weakening foreign ownership rules, scrapping the Inspector General for CSIS, eliminating oversight by the Auditor General and deep-sixing their own Accountability Act.

This is not the agenda the Conservatives campaigned on last year. Is that why the Conservatives are trying so hard to make sure Canadians do not see what is in the budget?

● (1420)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the words "utter fabrication" mean. I guess it means "I do not remember what I said last week", because last week the leader of the NDP said in this House in a question to me:

At the G20 meeting in April the Minister of Finance led the effort to block an international plan to resolve the European economic crisis. He told European countries "to step up to the plate" and fix the problem on their own, as if our fate were not intimately connected to theirs....

He then asked when we would come up with a plan.

He wants us to send billions to bail out Spanish banks, to bailout Greek banks. We believe that our answers for the economy here via the economic action plan 2012 are delivering for Canadians right here in Canada, not Spanish banks.



*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, our fate is intimately tied to what happens in Europe. We are not Fortress Canuck.

When the Conservatives withdrew Canada's application for membership in the Security Council, they did not withdraw it because they were afraid we would lose. They withdrew it because they knew we would be humiliated at the UN. The Canada they are projecting onto the world stage is unrecognizable to Canadians and unrecognizable to the world. That is the shame of the Conservatives.

[*Translation*]

The reality is also that there is a drift away from democracy. The government has imposed 30 gag orders.

Why prevent a study of the mammoth bill?

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Canada that we are projecting onto the world stage is that of an economic leader, a leader among developed countries. It is a country that has the lowest deficit of any of those major countries because we have taken measures here, and we will continue to balance our budget in economic action plan 2012. It is a country that has posted stronger economic growth and stronger job creation growth than any of those European economies because of the measures we have taken here.

The member opposes those measures. He wants to substitute sending billions over to Europe for those measures.

I appreciate he sees we are interconnected. I think the best way for us to help out the global economy is by ensuring the Canadian economy remains strong, not by sending our tax dollars abroad where good money is going after bad.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in light of the growing economic concerns around the world, the Conservatives have chosen to present a Trojan Horse that attacks employment insurance, old age security and the environment. None of the bill's measures deal with growth.

The economic measures in Bill C-38 could have been adopted already if the Conservatives had agreed to split the bill, but in these times of uncertainty, they prefer Euro-bashing and cutting services.

How will this help the economy?

[*English*]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would read the bill, she would learn that there is a hiring credit for small business, for example, that we are extending, which is vitally important for business across the country. That is a matter that is in the budget implementation act. It has direct economic consequences. It means jobs. It means people who are unemployed will become employed.

This is the bill that the opposition, the NDP opposition, wants to delay.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there are six times more cuts than job creation measures in this budget.

When faced with an economic crisis in 2008, the Minister of Finance tried to deny the crisis, and he brought forward a budget that dramatically cut spending, attacked collective bargaining rights and destroyed pay equity. The only thing that stopped Conservatives was a threat of losing their jobs.

With today's shaky world economy, why is the minister so hell-bent on a budget that does nothing to help growth, but instead cuts services and creates austerity, services that Canadians rely on?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to see austerity, then the member ought to look at the United Kingdom and other European countries. Because, quite frankly, of their failure to promote economic growth and their failure to achieve surpluses and balanced budgets over time, they are in the difficult situation, the crisis, they are in today.

We in Canada do not want to go to that place. We want to stay on track, stay on the economic action plan. We do not propose sending billions of Canadian tax dollars to Europe to support European banks, unlike the Leader of the Opposition.

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● (1425)

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance knows full well that any Canadian transfer to the IMF is not a tax transfer, it is not an expenditure transfer, it goes on our books as an asset, and the Minister of Finance knows that perfectly well.

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. The hon. member for Toronto Centre has the floor.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Mr. Speaker, it may be a convenient cartoon for the Minister of Finance to say that anybody is suggesting transferring Canadian tax dollars to European banks. Nobody is suggesting that.

I would just like to ask the Minister of Finance: what makes him think for a moment that Canada is, in fact, the island that he talked about on June 7?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are an island of stability because we have been posting stronger job growth and economic growth numbers and lower deficit numbers than others, but the Liberal leader is conveniently leaving out the fact that his own party is arguing that it should also join the Leader of the Opposition and have us send money abroad.

In fact, the member for Markham—Unionville said the following about the Spanish bank bailout:

Well I believe Canada should make a contribution. ...Canada should contribute its share to this process.

...this is a question of putting massive funds into the scene.

With the greatest of respect, we do not agree. That might be the kind of approach that worked in Ontario to get them into one of the deepest debts ever, under the leadership of that member. We will not do it here in Ottawa.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what has just been spoken reminds me very much of a distinguished Conservative predecessor of his, Neville Chamberlain, who said in 1938 at the time of Munich:

How horrible, fantastic, and incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing.

That is the kind of isolationism—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. The hon. government House leader.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in Canada's engagement in the globe on the economy, we have actually been leaders. We have been leaders through the G20 process, where the Prime Minister has led the way on preaching the importance of resisting protectionist measures, the kind of measures that member used to embrace when he was a member of the NDP, in resisting measures to see greater debt and in fact encouraging G20 commitments to see all governments work toward balanced budgets.

We see the importance of that, and the fact that Canada has been a leader in that is the reason why we have been performing better than others, the reason why we have more resources to focus on the Canadian economy to create jobs and growth here for Canadians for the future.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the sad reality is that the government has not been a leader in creating the new international—global—financial architecture that is needed to deal with the problems. There are no small problems in the world. We know very well that economic and financial viruses can travel from one country to another. No country is isolated, and it is ridiculous to say that Canada is an island in the world. Canada is involved in the world, and the government must start to realize that.

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the track record of that member when he actually had a chance to govern, as he did in Ontario, one will see why we reject that approach to economic policy. When he was Premier of Ontario, he raised taxes some 32 times. That would kill jobs in Canada. He put Ontario on the track to record deficits of \$10 billion, \$12 billion, \$11 billion, year after year, the highest ever in Ontario history. Of course, under his leadership, we saw that Ontario went to 10.9% unemployment, a stark contrast to our record of creating jobs to the tune of three-quarters of a million since—

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

• (1430)

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Let us have a bit of order. The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative record for workers is abysmal, attacking seasonal workers, temporary foreign workers and construction workers, and the worst is yet to come. The Conservatives' omnibus budget bill would give the minister carte blanche to make unilateral changes to employment insurance. If we cannot even trust the Conservatives with public legislation, how on earth can we trust them behind closed doors?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one thing we know we cannot trust is the NDP when it comes to creating jobs for Canadian workers. Every single thing we have brought in to help those who have been laid off to get new jobs and keep those jobs, and to support them while they are looking for jobs, the NDP members have voted against.

We introduced a tax EI credit for small businesses to create jobs. The NDP members voted against that. We are trying to help Canadians get back to work by connecting them with jobs that are available in their areas, and the NDP members are voting against it. Why will they not stand up for Canadian workers?

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister sure seems proud of an embarrassing record. However, she forgets two key facts. One, we will always vote against Conservative budgets that do not get the job done. Two, EI belongs to the workers who paid into it, not to that minister.

The minister refuses to meet with Canadians, listen to their representatives or hold any consultations outside the PMO. Will the minister stop using the budget bill to give herself new powers to undermine EI?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is utter fabrication. I and many of my colleagues have met with Canadians right across the country. We have listened and we have heard. People want help getting back to work. They want to make their families better off. Employers right across the country are looking for workers who quite often are discouraged from working because of the current structure of the EI system. We are changing that because we want these workers to have better access to jobs, so that they are better off, their families are better off and their employers are better off. That makes the country better off all round.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**PENSIONS**

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the unemployed are not the only ones in the crosshairs of this budget implementation bill. In clause 447, the government is raising the old age security eligibility age, effectively stealing money from seniors. These few lines will deny millions of workers access to a social program that they are entitled to. When one is not proud of what one is doing, one tries to hide it. It looks as though that is what the Conservatives are trying to do.

Does the minister not think that such changes merit in-depth study rather than a mere mention in such a gigantic budget bill?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we want old age security to be there for today's seniors and for future generations. We are changing the program to keep it sustainable. Nothing will change for people who are already receiving benefits. We will begin to gradually raise the retirement age in 2023 to ensure that the program remains available to all Canadians who need it.

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we understand that the minister is trying to justify the government's actions, but we would also like her to try to answer the question.

If the Conservatives are so bent on destroying old age security, they could have introduced a separate bill and taken the time to explain to MPs and seniors advocacy groups why they want to steal their money. At the very least they should have analyzed these changes thoroughly and publicly instead of hiding them in the middle of a 425-page bill. Old age security is too important a part of our social safety net to be sabotaged so negligently.

Does this government realize how irresponsible its approach is?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the old age security system is very important to us. It is one of the foundations of the social security system for our seniors. That is why we want to safeguard it, which means gradually increasing the eligibility age from 65 to 67, starting in 2023. In addition, we are going to give seniors the choice of receiving more money if they want to wait longer for it. They will have that choice.

\* \* \*

• (1435)

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this budget bill will allow mining and pipeline projects to move forward without proper consultation. The Conservatives are reducing the right to participate in environmental assessments, limiting that privilege to those directly affected. The minister refuses to clarify what that means.

Who is affected when a pipeline starts leaking? Is it just those who share the minister's opinion?

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the NDP members need to quit making things up. The public is well aware that we are focusing on making the review process far more predictable and timely. They know that we are trying to reduce duplication and regulatory overlap. They know that we are working to strengthen environmental protection. They know that we are enhancing consultations with aboriginal people.

The NDP needs to get on side with us and support the bill, rather than trying to delay it and opposing it at every turn.

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the Parliamentary Secretary knows, we only get one chance to do these projects right. Future generations are going to pay for today's mistakes. Instead of allowing a study of the bill, the Conservatives have rammed through sweeping changes to environmental protection. In one clause Conservatives create an entirely new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Now cabinet gets to overrule decisions from the National Energy Board. Politicians will decide, so there is no need for science or research or evidence.

Will the Conservatives stop their power grab and work with us to find a reasonable compromise?

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, reasonable compromise was months of consultations prior to the budget coming down. It was 50 hours of consultations and hearings at the finance committee and 20 more hours of hearings at the special committee set up to study these very things. The critic herself chose not to attend most of those committee meetings after she had taken a slot on the committee, so she should not be giving us a lecture about listening to Canadians.

We have heard from Canadians. They support this budget. They want to go ahead with it. They want jobs and economic prosperity in our country, and we aim to provide that for them.

\* \* \*

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend for the first time every Inuit publicly protested. They wanted to draw Canadians' attention to the high prices for food in Nunavut and across the north: \$15 for a small bag of apples and the same for a 2-litre carton of milk.

After Conservatives replaced the food mail program with the nutrition north program, people saw their food budgets increase. Will the Conservatives admit the nutrition north program needs fixing and find a way to correct their mistakes?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. Of course we are committed to providing northerners with safe, secure and healthy food choices at affordable prices at the point of purchase in their communities. In consultation with northerners, retailers and suppliers, we created an advisory board made up of northerners to take stakeholders' concerns and provide recommendations to the government as this program develops. We have northerners' concerns in mind, which is why we even support safe and secure traditional foods, and important items like baby food and formula are subsidized.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that just does not cut it. The Conservatives have boasted for years about their northern strategy and have promised investments to promote social development in the north, but on one of the most fundamental aspects, food, their approach is failing Canadians who live in these remote communities.

The problem with nutrition north is that while subsidies were supposed to help food prices go down, consumers have no idea where the savings are. Will the Conservatives commit to making the program more transparent?

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the member actually had isolated and remote communities in her riding, as I do—more than 25—she would know that at the point of purchase, there are savings on many kinds of healthy food. Nutrition north is bringing fresh, healthy food to northern homes. The program allows for a new, market-driven model that is sustainable, efficient, cost-effective and transparent. It means bringing safe, secure and healthy food to northerners at affordable prices.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last month, I met with the UN special rapporteur to discuss the outrageous and prohibitive food prices in communities like Kashechewan, Attawapiskat and Fort Albany. The health minister had a chance to show real leadership, but instead she led this embarrassing attack on the United Nations. The government knows to ship Timbits to Kandahar but has no idea about how to get fresh milk to Attawapiskat.

It is a simple question. Instead of attacking the United Nations, will the minister stand to admit that she has blown this file and that the government has no plan to help communities in the Far North?

● (1440)

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, northerners asked for a program that focused on healthy foods and traditional foods and on making them safe, secure and affordable at the point of purchase, which is a major renovation from the food mail program. We did consult—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor. I would like to hear him finish the answer.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** I thank you, Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues here do.

Mr. Speaker, we have continued listening through the advisory board made up of northerners and we are implementing changes based upon what they have heard. This is an ongoing process.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I suppose we were a bit hasty in complimenting the government on its shipbuilding strategy.

To go along with other botched procurements in this decade of doofus, including the F-35s, the fixed-wing search and rescue, the military vehicles, the close combat vehicles, the Chinooks, we now learn that the shipbuilding plan is both behind schedule and over budget.

Does this mean we are going to have another seven-point plan administered by the three blind mice and the minister of gazebos?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is very proud of the fact that we have committed to building our ships here in Canada for the Navy and Coast Guard. We know that our national shipbuilding strategy means long-term jobs and investment in the shipbuilding industry and will create more than 75 million person-hours of work for the Canadian shipbuilding industry.

This is a long-term industrial strategy. I have every confidence that Irving and Seaspan will work with the Coast Guard and the Navy to implement these projects on time and on budget. For our part, we will be providing oversight.

\* \* \*

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and chief government ethics spokesperson continues to be under active investigation and is facing the highest personal penalties in the Canada Elections Act.

*Oral Questions*

Now he says he has the records that will explain it all. What is he waiting for? When will he release them?

If the parliamentary secretary needs more time to focus on his own ethical mess, will the Prime Minister do him a favour and relieve him of his duties as the government's ethically challenged ethics spokesperson?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has already submitted all of the relevant documents to Elections Canada. That was almost four years ago. They were audited and approved by that agency at that time. Now we have unproven allegations by the opposition, which is just trying to distract from the fact that its own finance spokesman came out over the weekend and said that he wanted to take “massive” quantities of Canadian tax dollars and send them over to Europe at a time when this government is focused on creating jobs and building our economy here at home.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is one of a long list with government denials that do not add up.

In the 2006 in-and-out scandal, the previous parliamentary secretary, the one who just answered, spent years denying guilt. However, the Conservatives had to own up and paid \$300,000 for election fraud—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. There is still far too much noise.

The hon. member for Malpeque has the floor.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** —and now, for the 2008 campaign, the current parliamentary secretary is himself being investigated for election fraud.

I ask the public security minister: has the RCMP been called in?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is coming from a member of Parliament who tried to claim rent money from the taxpayers, money to which he was not even entitled, and then kept it secret.

We are used to that side of the House throwing rocks when they live in glass houses. However, if they are going to live in a glass house, at least they should pay rent to live there.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, at a time when the Conservatives are stealing money from the unemployed and seniors by cutting employment insurance and old age security, spending at the Department of National Defence has increased by \$4 billion over the past year.

The President of the Treasury Board had asked all departments to reduce their spending, but the Minister of National Defence took the

opportunity to increase spending, despite the F-35 fiasco, which does not even factor into this equation.

How does the Minister of National Defence, with his creative accounting, explain going over budget by \$4 billion?

● (1445)

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what I do know is that the Department of National Defence has enjoyed a billion-dollar increase in our budget, thanks to the support of the Minister of Finance and our Prime Minister. That has allowed us to embark on new procurements. It has allowed us to put new programming in place to support our men and women in uniform.

The department's spending is reported through public accounts that are tabled in the fall. The public accounts will reflect those year-by-year adjustments.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a whopping \$3.8 billion was reportedly spent in one month alone. The minister's talking points do not explain the 55% hike in his department's March madness spending. At the same time, a majority of shipbuilding projects are being pushed back, with a three-year delay expected in the delivery of ships for the Arctic.

Managing things properly, on time and on budget is out the window with the Conservatives. What concrete measures will the minister be taking to reign in the out-of-control spending in his department?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said, the public accounts will reflect the year-end adjustments.

Also, *The Fiscal Monitor* is produced by the Department of Finance and reported on an accrual basis, not actual spending. Although the final expenditures will not be available until the fall of 2012 and cannot be released until tabled in Parliament, it is expected that the department's accrual expenditures will be similar to those in fiscal 2010-11.

I do know that we are not going to take advice from the no-defence party, which opposes everything we spend on the military.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we hear the minister's comments, but what we want and what Canadians expect is for the government to keep its promises.

Shipyards have been selected for the national shipbuilding strategy, but no contracts have been signed. Meanwhile, spending is out of control, and we still have returning soldiers struggling with mental health issues and lacking adequate support.

Can the minister gain control of his department to make sure priorities are met and our soldiers are looked after?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the answer is, of course, yes. We are making major investments across the board in procurement, base improvements and programs that support the military, their families and veterans.

The ironic thing about the question from the member opposite is that when we make these investments, in every case he and his colleagues in the no-defence party stand up and oppose those measures. There is one word for the member opposite, and that is “hypocrite”.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, those were three opportunities for the Minister of National Defence to account for almost \$4 billion of spending in one month alone. He failed three times, and this after being advised that the Canada first defence strategy—by his own department, I would add—is unaffordable. Now even shipbuilding threatens to blow the bank, but the minister, undeterred, treats defence procurement like his own personal shopping spree.

Will the minister put down the catalogue and present a new, prudent defence strategy, including the required equipment that will serve our troops as they serve to protect us?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, how ironic and how sad that the member opposite would suggest that military procurement, investments in our brave men and women and investments in our returning soldiers who need treatment that they and their families benefit from somehow depend on a catalogue.

What we are doing is investing in these programs, procurements, and people who need that support. That party and that member continually oppose those investments, to the detriment of the men and women in uniform.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by the agreement concluded this weekend among members of the eurozone to stabilize the Spanish banking system. These small steps are the kinds of measures that Europeans must undertake to move their economies forward.

Can the Minister of Finance please comment on the situation in Europe as we head into next week's G20 summit in Mexico?

• (1450)

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are encouraged to see Europe taking steps to tackle the ongoing challenges with respect to sovereign indebtedness and with respect to undercapitalization of the banks. We have consistently urged our European allies to do so. Europe has the resources to do this and we applaud it for the announced measure. We look forward to the timely implementation of this next action in Europe.

In contrast, of course, we will not be advocating for the use of Canadian tax resources to bail out European banks, unlike the NDP.

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, despite widespread opposition, the fisheries minister is stubbornly moving ahead with his threat to scrap fleet separation.

An independent fishery once flourished on the west coast, but then owner-operator rules were removed and the industry is now dominated by large corporate interests. This is the future fleet devastation that awaits the east coast fishery.

Will the minister stand up for an independent east coast fishery and withdraw his reckless plan to eliminate fleet separation?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, apparently the member opposite has a crystal ball that I do not have. There is no mention in the BIA about fleet separation or anything else.

I consulted with the fishermen and asked for their feedback on what they perceived as possible solutions to improving the fishery. Obviously, I got some feedback in that regard and I am carefully considering all of the feedback that I have received.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I can understand the minister not telling us what is going on. He has not talked to the fishers or the communities that will be affected by his cuts.

We now learn that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will no longer be enforcing the tagging of lobsters, which will have a devastating impact on the ability of the industry to conserve lobster stocks into the future.

When will the minister recognize that he is going down a reckless path and start consulting with fishermen? When will he recognize that this is the time to make some changes?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for admitting that his party is prepared for change when it comes to modernizing the fishery.

I tend to think that the NDP makes up questions on the go. I have no idea what the member is talking about when he talks about eliminating the tagging of lobster.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has proven once again that he has no desire to protect fish habitat or listen to people from the fishing communities.

After his devastating cuts that eliminated contaminants surveillance, weakened marine safety and eliminated six regional offices, the minister is now warning us that there are more cuts to come. The fishery is one of our national industries.

Why is the minister refusing to tell Canadians what essential services will be cut next?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about close to 11,000 employees in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We have sent out 1,000 letters of notification that jobs may be affected, which will probably net out to 400 jobs, just slightly over 3% of the total employment in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which can easily be handled through attrition.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, frankly, this minister is not giving us any answers, is not being transparent in any way and is not taking any responsibility. The fishing communities deserve better.

Things are going from bad to worse. He is not only dismantling his department, but he is also threatening the survival of independent fishers with his irresponsible policies. Atlantic fishers have been clear: fleet separation has to be maintained, but the minister is turning a deaf ear. He is not consulting our fishers.

Why is the minister insisting on attacking independent east coast fishers and favouring multi-national companies?

*[English]*

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that one thing that I have done is consulted. The purpose of our consultation process was to hear back from people in the fishery and fishing industry as to what they thought we could do as a government to improve the fishery and improve our efficiencies to make it so fishers can actually make a living from fishing.

That is what we are doing. We are listening to people and analyzing what we have heard.

\* \* \*

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, Nunavummiut took to the streets to protest the high cost of food in the riding of the Minister of Health.

The minister's nutrition north has utterly and predictably failed to lower food prices for northerners.

Will the minister finally admit that food and security is a crisis, accept that nutrition north is not doing the job, start doing hers and implement concrete solutions so northerners can feed their families?

● (1455)

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, in consultation with northerners, retailers and suppliers, we have created an advisory board made up of northerners to take stakeholders' concerns and provide recommendations to the government as the nutrition north program continues to develop.

Our government has entered into formal agreements with food retailers to ensure accountability and to ensure the subsidy is being

passed on to consumers, which means at the point of purchase in those communities.

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*[Translation]***POVERTY**

**Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government decided not to renew grants to a number of social organizations, claiming that they no longer meet the established criteria, but these organizations help the very people who are not eligible for the tax credits offered by the government for sports and cultural activities, the very people for whom the \$1,200 offered directly to families is not enough to pay for child care.

Why does the government only care about the most fortunate members of society?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our party believes that parents are in the best position to decide how to raise their children. We therefore give them \$100 a month for each child under the age of six, so that they can choose child care that is most appropriate for their family.

We are very proud of this program and we will keep it.

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*[English]***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the Conservatives' punishing refugees act goes to the other place, the opposition to Conservative attacks on refugee health care is growing. The Canadian Medical Association and seven other national medical organizations have warned the minister that these changes could be catastrophic.

I want to ask the minister the same question that doctors who treat refugees are asking. Are we, as a country, willing to risk the health of a pregnant mother? Is this the kind of Canada the minister and the Conservatives really want?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member asked the question because it once more reinforces that the New Democratic Party is in favour of giving extra supplementary taxpayer-funded health benefits that are not available to taxpaying Canadian citizens, and that is just wrong.

We are standing on the principle that there should be equal access to health care and that bogus asylum claimants should not be getting health benefits. They should be leaving Canada. Asylum claimants will be getting basic care, but no better care than what provincial governments give to taxpaying Canadians. We stand by that.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that all of these changes to immigration will merely transfer costs to the provinces, which he refused to consult.

The most vulnerable people in the country will pay the price. The Canadian Paediatric Society has sounded the alarm. If these changes go through, a child with pneumonia may be denied access to antibiotics; a child with diabetes may be denied access to a doctor; a pregnant woman may be denied prenatal care.

Is that the kind of Canada the minister really wants?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our reforms will provide health insurance to resettled refugees and the vast majority of asylum seekers, but refugees will no longer receive federal health insurance that Canadian taxpayers do not receive. We believe that supplementary insurance should not be provided to asylum seekers. We believe that people should be treated fairly the same way we treat Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

\* \* \*

• (1500)

[English]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is tax freedom day.

I know it deeply saddens my NDP and Liberal colleagues, but today is the day when hard-working Canadians no longer have to send tax dollars into three levels of government. On this side of the House, our Conservative government believes that Canadian families should pay low taxes, and that is why, since taking office in 2006, we have taken steps to lower the tax burden on Canadian families to its lowest point in over 50 years.

Would the Minister of Finance please inform the House how much earlier tax freedom day takes place today than it did when we took office?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in 2005, before our government was elected, under the tax-and-spend Liberals, tax freedom day was on June 26.

Now, following over 140 tax reductions, like lowering the GST, personal taxes, business taxes, introducing the tax-free savings account and much more, tax freedom day is now over two weeks earlier.

A low-tax plan for the average Canadian family means a savings of \$3,100 per family.

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**RCMP**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for five years, the Conservatives have battled disabled veterans, including Dennis Manuge, in court to justify pension clawbacks. The disabled vets prevailed.

For the last four years, Royal Canadian Mounted Police veterans have been locked in a similar law suit against the government to stop

clawbacks of their pensions. Gerald Buote from Summerside led the suit, but has passed away waiting for resolution.

Will the Conservative government again throw everything at the RCMP vets to deny their legal rights or do the honourable thing and include them in the discussions arising out of the Manuge victory in the Federal Court?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very proud of the work that we have done with the RCMP. For example, we invested over \$150 million in the Depot Division in Regina to ensure that what happened under the Liberal Party does not happen again where it shut down training at Depot.

That is the party that turned its back on the RCMP. We will continue to work with the RCMP and ensure that Canadians are safe.

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**G20 SUMMIT**

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a G20 planning document by the Canadian Forces listed a number of potential security threats, among them, embarrassment to the Government of Canada.

It is too bad it did not listen, because that is exactly what happened. It cannot plan the largest civil security undertaking in Canadian history on the back of an envelope in four short months. The results were smashed windows, illegal arrests and a city turned upside down.

After so many G20 failures, will the government finally do something right and apologize to the people of Toronto?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would know that security decisions around the G8 and G20 summits were made by security experts, not politicians.

In fact, the members of the Canadian Forces, who supported the RCMP and the municipal and provincial police, were there to provide security for Canadians and for our international guests. This was an unprecedented period in our country's history with the G8 and G20 coming back to back.

I am very proud of the work that was done by members of the Canadian Forces.

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**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is cutting red tape to ensure our veterans receive the benefits and services they deserve more quickly.



We have already taken several steps through the cutting red tape for veterans initiative. These include reducing the paperwork and wait time for veterans, using plain language in its letters to veterans, and moving to upfront payments to veterans for certain elements of the veterans independence program.

Could the Minister of Veterans Affairs provide an update on our government's cutting red tape for veterans initiative?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Huron—Bruce for his support for veterans and for bringing the Helmets to Hardhats partners to the table.

[Translation]

This morning, I spoke to the Royal Canadian Legion in Halifax and announced a new measure to cut red tape for veterans who travel for medical purposes.

[English]

With these new measures, veterans will no longer have to submit receipts to receive the financial support they need to cover travel expenses incurred for medical appointments. Dominion president, Pat Varga, says that any change or improvement that makes the process easier for veterans is great.

I will support—

• (1505)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### HOUSING

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for a year now, the Government of Quebec and the NDP have been asking the federal government to help more than 1,000 families that have been forced to rebuild their basements because of the presence of pyrrhotite in the concrete.

Since the NDP made this request, the Conservatives have still not reviewed the federal standards on the composition of concrete and have still not provided any financial support to the families that have had to spend an average of \$200,000 on repairs.

The Government of Quebec, the municipalities and even businesses have already done their share. Why are the Conservatives dragging their feet on this file?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Quebec has set up a program to help the home owners affected by pyrrhotite.

Any home owner who needs assistance should submit an application to the Société d'habitation du Québec.

\* \* \*

[English]

### G20 SUMMIT

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Minister of National Defence. I was

### Privilege

surprised to hear him claim that decisions around the G20 were made by security experts.

Since the G20 for 2010 had already been planned for November in South Korea, since the Prime Minister of Canada decided to offer up Canada for a second G20 in the same year, at more or less the last minute, and since the Prime Minister decided to put it in downtown Toronto over the objections of the mayor of Toronto, what security expert dictated these decisions to the Prime Minister?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I repeat that security issues, security matters and decisions around the G8 and G20 were made by experts, not by the Prime Minister and not by politicians. They were made in close consultation among a number of departments, including Public Safety as well as the Department of National Defence. There were preparations in place for acts of possible disruption, planned violence, civil disobedience and even for some sort of terrorist attack. Those decisions are best made by experts.

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### PRIVILEGE

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege arising from question period, the comments of the Minister of National Defence and his personal attack unleashed on me in response to a question.

On this side, we are used to the practice on the other side, which has become commonplace, of attacking the party by saying that we did not vote for a particular measure, even though we all know, as parliamentarians, that when an opposition party votes against the budget, it is a matter of confidence in the budget. We are used to that.

However, when the minister in this case launched a personal attack on me and went so far as to use unparliamentary language in his attack on me, that goes beyond even just the use of unparliamentary language, which I hope he will apologize for and withdraw, but it also goes beyond that into a personal attack on a member, suggesting, in frankly a deceitful way, that when we vote against the budget, we are voting against a particular measure, one or another.

We all know that there is \$250 billion in the budget and there are many things in it that of course we support, but this practice and this personal attack is unparliamentary and is a matter of personal privilege.

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is used to being in a court of law. The facts, on their voting record, do speak for themselves.

With respect to the personal attack, I do know, having been here a number of years, the use of the word “hypocrite”. I referred to the hon. member for St. John's East as a hypocrite, and I apologize for calling him a hypocrite, and I reserve the word “hypocrite” in reference to the member for St. John's East.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, that was probably the least apologetic apology I have ever heard in this Parliament.

*Privilege***POINTS OF ORDER**

## STATEMENT BY MEMBERS

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during a statement I made in the House on Friday, there was an error where remarks I quoted could have been attributed to the member for Saint-Jean. I want to be clear that the member for Saint-Jean made no such statement and I in no way meant to attribute those remarks to him.

Upon becoming aware of this error, I apologized to the member, and have ensured that *Hansard* is now accurate.

I wish to publicly apologize to that member for any inconvenience this may have caused.

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Tarik Brahmī (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I accept the hon. member's apology. I think it was an error made by his team and his staffers. I will not hold it against him.

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. members for their interventions.

I understand the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley has a question of privilege.

\* \* \*

**PRIVILEGE**

## BILL C-38

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, is decorum not a nice thing when it breaks out in here once in a while?

I bring forward a question of privilege, after significant work and research, with regard to the bill we have before us in Parliament. I bear your consideration, Mr. Speaker. A letter will be forthcoming to your office to outline and explain the specific details, but we believe we do have a prima facie case of privilege. We have looked at this with very careful consideration, and I would like to thank my team for putting this together under difficult circumstances.

There are many charges of contempt that go on within this place and not all of those are privilege, but every finding of privilege is in fact a contempt. The definition of this is that the powers of Parliament to do its job, to do three things in particular, to legislate, deliberate and hold the government to account, are paramount to all of our work. We know, through the very Constitution itself, that the exclusive legislative authority of the Parliament of Canada extends to all matters coming within the classes of subjects hereinafter enumerated, "1A. The Public Debt and Property...2A. Unemployment Insurance...8. The fixing of and providing for the Salaries and Allowances of Civil and other Officers of the Government of Canada". This will be the focus of our point with you this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

We have also confirmed this all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada in *Canada v. Vaid* in 2005, that the supremacy of Parliament to do its job in this regard is paramount and cannot be confined nor restricted. O'Brien and Bosc on page 59 confirm this and that this

right, this privilege can be broken either individually for members or collectively for us as a group. We include very explicitly that the privileges of members of the governing side have also been infringed by the process that has been taken on through Bill C-38.

Page 61 of O'Brien and Bosc states:

The privileges of Members of the House of Commons provide the absolute immunity they require to perform their parliamentary work while the collective or corporate rights of the House are the necessary means by which the House effectively discharges its functions.

We have built our case, Mr. Speaker, and are confident that you will find in this that the breach of privilege conducted here is significant enough to warrant a decision from you, hastily, after other parties have had their opportunity to intervene.

In one of the last rulings by your predecessor, Speaker Milliken, on April 27, 2010, in ruling on the question of privilege surrounding the provision of information to the special committee on the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, Speaker Milliken said:

In a system of responsible government, the fundamental right of the House of Commons to hold the government to account for its actions is an indisputable privilege and in fact an obligation.

Herein lies our privilege. We have used every available tool to the opposition through questions on the order paper, requests through the Parliamentary Budget Officer, through questions during question period and at committee directed to the ministers pertaining to this issue, to understand directly and implicitly the impacts of the legislation that the government has been moving forward through its budgets and explicitly about what the cuts and implications will be for its budget measures, cuts to either services or to the number of employees who will be affected.

Allow me to say this, Mr. Speaker, and it is extremely important for your ruling, there is no dispute from the government side that the numbers in fact exist. The government is well aware of what the impacts will be on Canadians and has in fact publicly declared that the information exists. We heard from the President of the Treasury Board himself. He said in an interview with a reporter on May 9 of this year that he would like to release more information but was held "hostage" to parliamentary reporting procedures and labour contracts, which require notices to affected employees going out before cuts could be made".

Essentially, the government is requiring members of Parliament to vote blind on the legislation coming forward. In our conversations with the Parliamentary Budget Officer and in his conversations with the government, he has explicitly requested the information that has been made available to him, by right, under the act that the government moved as its second act, the Federal Accountability Act. Various places in the act require the government to produce, in a timely and transparent manner, information that exists.

*Privilege*

There are two reasons why the government may withhold this information: if the information is not accessible through access to information; or if the information is confidentially provided to cabinet. The Clerk of the Privy Council has provided neither of those reasons. Herein lies the case of privilege. In citing the reasons of confidentiality because of some obligations under the collective agreement with the various unions that make up the civil service, while I may say as a caveat is a unique moment where the government has actually cared about a collective agreement with anybody under their employ, the reason given by the Privy Council, the head of the civil service, is not a valid one.

● (1515)

That is not a reason that he can use to block information to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. That is not an exercisable reason under the act and it in fact impedes parliamentarians from doing their work and, as I said, makes them vote blind on the actual budget. There is no cabinet confidentiality and these are not pieces of information that have been denied through access to information. To say this is critical to members of Parliament to understand before they vote on the budget is an understatement.

The government has moved a number of measures, which will have impacts on Canadian society, through the services and programs Canadians rely upon and directly through employees of the federal government and communities across this country. I would have expected members of the government to ask this question, but they have so far been mute on this point.

In breaking the Federal Accountability Act, the government has once again shown that perhaps the act is not worth the paper it is written on. This is the response we got from the Clerk of the Privy Council, in a letter written to the Parliamentary Budget Officer on May 15. It states:

...but, as indicated in the Budget document, the Government is equally committed to treating its employees fairly and respecting its contractual obligations. This means that departments will provide information to affected employees and their unions in the first instance, as required under the applicable collective agreements. Once this has happened...the Government will then begin...to communicate accordingly.

That is, it will then offer up to the Parliamentary Budget Officer and, through him, to parliamentarians the information.

The unions have been contacted and they have publicly said to the government and to the Privy Council that this does not break their collective agreement, thereby taking away the sole reason of the government to deny MPs their privilege.

I will run through the timeline and finish with this. The first thing members of Parliament sought to do was to request the information from the government, as is our obligation under the Standing Orders as members of Parliament, that is, to find out what the impacts of the bill would be. This would apply to any bill. Certainly with a bill as broad and sweeping as this, this would be important. The government denied this, either through question period or at committee. We then sought information through questions on the order paper. That too was denied. We then sought information through the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who is legally obligated and enshrined with the right to seek this information unless legally denied, which he was not. That too was denied by the government. We are now at a place where we are being forced in some short time

to vote on a bill whose impacts the government understands, but refuses to share with members of Parliament and those people whom we seek to represent. This is, by all definitions we can find, an infringement of the rights and privileges of members of Parliament.

If the House cannot hold the government of the day to account, then why have the House at all? If members of Parliament cannot do their jobs and cannot go back to their constituents with a clear conscience and understanding of the legislation that has been brought before us and its implications, then why are members of Parliament in the service of Canadians at all? They are not.

We seek this through you, Mr. Speaker. We carefully went through all of O'Brien and Bosc, which offered us numerous points. I will mention one. On page 281 of *Bourinot's Parliamentary Procedure and Practice in the Dominion of Canada*, it states:

The right of Parliament to obtain every possible information on public questions is undoubted, and the circumstances must be exceptional, and the reasons very cogent, when it cannot be at once laid before the houses.

There is no such reason given by the government. The Conservatives do not deny that the information exists, that the cuts to services and programming for Canadians exist and are understood. They have said that, from the most senior bureaucrat down, the person who works with the Prime Minister. The President of the Treasury Board has also said that the information exists. Their reasons for denying members of Parliament their right to this information have also been shown to be not true. All that is left in defence of this place, in defence of members of Parliament, is you, Mr. Speaker, whose job and role it is to defend the institution, regardless of the sways of the political discourse that goes on every day. The institution requires us to have the information to both debate and vote with clear conscience and information. The government is denying us that information. While this may be a pathology with the Conservatives, it does not give them the opportunity or the reason to deny members of Parliament these key and critical data. It is absolutely essential for us to maintain, as best as we may through all of the discourse that goes on here, certain principles.

The principle that we in opposition hold dearly is that our job, each and every day, is to hold the government to account. There should be those on the other side who share that principle, because that is a principle shared by all of us. The Conservatives may heckle the opportunity to speak and they may suggest that there is not something of right and privilege here, but they know better.

● (1520)

I remember the days when that hon. members on that side stood for these principles. I remember the days when we in opposition worked with the government on its second piece of legislation, the Accountability Act, as we have quoted here today, which set up an institution that we agreed with the Parliamentary Budget Officer should seek and garner this information.

*Routine Proceedings*

Now what do we have? We have a government that insists that members of Parliament should vote blind, that Canadians should simply trust them and that it is somehow good enough. This is not a right-left issue; this is right and wrong. The government knows it is wrong. The government has the information and is denying Parliament and parliamentarians and the people we represent access to information that we need.

There is much more that we could say, but I understand that time is pressing. I am therefore prepared to move an appropriate motion if you, Mr. Speaker, find a prima facie question of contempt.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my friend for his novel and innovative approach to this question, but I think it actually ends up being so innovative that it is far off the mark.

First, I will start by saying that I believe what he was saying was that we have to deal with this now because it is in the context of Bill C-38. I understand that is the context in which he raises his point of order.

Of course a point of order such as this has to be raised at the earliest possible opportunity. Bill C-38 was introduced into the House on April 26. We are now some month and a half later, so he is very late in raising this argument.

Second, he has not cited any particular section or provision of the bill to which he takes exception, and for which he says these important questions have not been answered. Once again, I think what he is talking about is not anything to do with any content of Bill C-38, so he is off the mark there.

Third, the kinds of measures to which he is speaking, moneys that are spent on programs and personnel, are normally reported and approved by Parliament, not by a budget implementation act but rather through the appropriations bills that appear before this Parliament. That is the appropriate point for him to raise his questions. That is the process through which Parliament would report and provide the information he is looking for.

If he is looking for more detailed information than is in one of those appropriation bills, that would be the point for him to raise those questions and points. We are not currently dealing with an appropriation bill through this House. There is no appropriation bill outstanding before this House. I expect that he may wish to return to his point of order some months hence, when we have our next appropriation bill before the House, if he feels he has not achieved satisfaction at that time, that is, if he feels that the reporting mechanisms of the government have not been sufficient. However, we certainly are not facing that situation in any way with regard to Bill C-38.

Therefore, I think his point is very far off the mark, but I would be happy to return if further submissions are required.

**The Speaker:** I thank both hon. members for their interventions on this point. I will get back to the House in due course.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 30 petitions.

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities in relation to Bill C-321, An Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (library materials).

[Translation]

The committee has studied the bill and decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

\* \* \*

● (1525)

[English]

**EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS**

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

That, pursuant to Standing Order 27, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be 12 midnight, commencing on Monday, June 11, 2012, and concluding on Friday, June 22, 2012, but not including Friday, June 15, 2012.

He said: Today I rise to make the case for the government's motion to extend the working hours of this House until midnight for the next two weeks. This is of course a motion made in the context of the Standing Orders, which expressly provide for such a motion to be made on this particular day once a year.

Over the past year, our government's top priority has remained creating jobs and economic growth.

[Translation]

Job creation and economic growth have remained important priorities for our government.

[English]

Under the government's economic action plan, Canada's deficits and taxes are going down; investments in education, skills training, and research and innovation are going up; and excessive red tape and regulations are being eliminated.

As the global economic recovery remains fragile, especially in Europe, Canadians want their government to focus on what matters most: jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity. This is what our Conservative government has been doing.

*Routine Proceedings*

On March 29, the Minister of Finance delivered economic action plan 2012, a comprehensive budget that coupled our low-tax policy with new actions to promote jobs and economic growth.

[*Translation*]

The 2012 budget proposed measures aimed at putting our finances in order, increasing innovation and creating suitable and applicable legislation in the area of resource development in order to promote a good, stable investment climate.

The budget was debated for four days and was adopted by the House on April 4. The Minister of Finance then introduced Bill C-38, Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity Act, the 2012 budget implementation bill. The debate at second reading of Bill C-38 was the longest debate on a budget implementation bill in at least two decades, and probably the longest ever.

On May 14, after seven days of debate, Bill C-38 was passed at second reading.

[*English*]

The bill has also undergone extensive study in committee. The Standing Committee on Finance held in-depth hearings on the bill. The committee also created a special subcommittee for detailed examination of the bill's responsible resource development provisions. All told, this was the longest committee study of any budget implementation bill for at least the last two decades, and probably ever.

We need to pass Bill C-38 to implement the urgent provisions of economic action plan 2012. In addition to our economic measures, our government has brought forward and passed bills that keep the commitments we made to Canadians in the last election.

In a productive, hard-working and orderly way, we fulfilled long-standing commitments to give marketing freedom to western Canadian grain farmers, to end the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry, and to improve our democracy by moving every province closer to the principle of representation by population in the House of Commons.

However, in the past year our efforts to focus on the priorities of Canadians have been met with nothing but delay and obstruction tactics by the opposition. In some cases, opposition stalling and delaying tactics have meant that important bills are still not yet law. That is indeed regrettable.

In the case of Bill C-11, the copyright modernization act, a bill that will help to create good, high-paying jobs in Canada's creative and high-tech sectors, this House has debated the bill on 10 days. We heard 79 speeches on it before it was even sent to committee. This is, of course, on top of similar debate that occurred in previous Parliaments on similar bills.

It is important for us to get on with it and pass this bill for the sake of those sectors of our economy, to ensure that Canada remains competitive in a very dynamic, changing high-tech sector in the world, so that we can have Canadian jobs and Canadian leadership in that sector.

Bill C-24 is the bill to implement the Canada-Panama free trade agreement. It has also been the subject of numerous days of debate,

in fact dozens and dozens of speeches in the House, and it has not even made it to committee yet.

Bill C-23 is the Canada-Jordan economic growth and prosperity act. It also implements another important job-creating free trade agreement.

All three of these bills have actually been before this place longer than for just the last year. As I indicated, they were originally introduced in previous Parliaments. Even then, they were supported by a majority of members of this House and were adopted and sent to committee. However, they are still not law.

• (1530)

We are here to work hard for Canadians. Adopting today's motion would give the House sufficient time to make progress on each of these bills prior to the summer recess. Adopting today's motion would also give us time to pass Bill C-25, the pooled registered pension plans act. It is a much-needed piece of legislation that would give Canadians in small businesses and self-employed workers yet another option to help support them in saving for their retirement. Our government is committed to giving Canadians as many options as possible to secure their retirement and to have that income security our seniors need. This is another example of how we can work to give them those options.

In addition to these bills that have been obstructed, opposed or delayed one way or another by the opposition, there are numerous bills that potentially have support from the opposition side but still have not yet come to a vote. By adding hours to each working day in the House over the next two weeks, we would allow time for these bills to come before members of Parliament for a vote. These include: Bill C-12, safeguarding Canadians' personal information act; and Bill C-15, strengthening military justice in the defence of Canada act. I might add, that bill is long overdue as our military justice system is in need of these proposed changes. It has been looking for them for some time. It is a fairly small and discrete bill and taking so long to pass this House is not a testament to our productivity and efficiency. I hope we will be able to proceed with that.

Bill C-27 is the first nations financial transparency act, another step forward in accountability. Bill C-28 is the financial literacy leader act. At a time when we are concerned about people's financial circumstances, not just countries' but individuals', this is a positive step forward to help people improve their financial literacy so all Canadians can face a more secure financial future. Bill C-36 is the protecting Canada's seniors act which aims to prevent elder abuse. Does it not make sense that we move forward on that to provide Canadian seniors the protection they need from those very heinous crimes and offences which have become increasingly common in news reports in recent years?

*Routine Proceedings*

Bill C-37 is the increasing offenders' accountability for victims act. This is another major step forward for readjusting our justice system which has been seen by most Canadians as being for too long concerned only about the rights and privileges of the criminals who are appearing in it, with insufficient consideration for the needs of victims and the impact of those criminal acts on them. We want to see a rebalancing of the system and that is why Bill C-37 is so important.

Of course, we have bills that have already been through the Senate, and are waiting on us to deal with them. Bill S-2, which deals with matrimonial real property, which would give fairness and equality to women on reserve, long overdue in this country. Let us get on with it and give first nations women the real property rights they deserve. Then there is Bill S-6, first nations electoral reform, a provision we want to see in place to advance democracy. Bill S-8 is the safe drinking water for first nations act; and Bill S-7 is the combatting terrorism act.

As members can see, there is plenty more work for this House to do. As members of Parliament, the least we can do is put in a bit of overtime and get these important measures passed.

In conclusion, Canada's economic strength, our advantage in these uncertain times, and our stability also depend on political stability and strong leadership. Across the world, political gridlock and indecision have led to economic uncertainty and they continue to threaten the world economy. That is not what Canadians want for their government. Our government is taking action to manage the country's business in a productive, hard-working and orderly fashion. That is why all members need to work together in a time of global economic uncertainty to advance the important bills I have identified, before we adjourn for the summer.

I call on all members to support today's motion to extend the working hours of this House by a few hours for the next two weeks. For the members opposite, not only do I hope for their support in this motion, I also hope I can count on them to put the interests of Canadians first and work with this government to pass the important bills that remain before us.

• (1535)

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, regrettably, it comes as no surprise to hear the government House leader move this motion today for extended hours over the next two weeks. It is also no surprise that New Democrats are going to oppose it. Time is at a premium in this place and is a very powerful commodity.

I listened very carefully to what the government House leader had to say. He called on all members to work together in a constructive way. However, it seems to me that the process for doing that has to come from the government. There has to be a trustful relationship and a sense of goodwill about how the House agenda is managed. There are House leader meetings that take place every week to do that.

I find ironic that we have a government that is intent on restricting the amount of time for debate, whether on Bill C-38 or many others. About 24 bills have had time allocation or some sort of closure applied to them. On the one hand, the government is restricting the

time for debate, but, on the other hand, wants more time. Why? It is because it wants to ram these bills through.

The government House leader gave an indication of some of the bills that the government is looking at. It seems to me that the proper place for that, where there is agreement, is at House leader meetings which are for that purpose. We now know the motivation for doing that, which is to push these bills through very quickly, as we are seeing with Bill C-38. If we allowed that to happen, we would be derelict in our duty. It would not be members working together, it would be the government acting in a very high-handed manner.

I would ask the government House leader on what basis he believes he has the authority to ram these bills through. I know he can move this motion, but in terms of proper process, is this not another example of ramming through government legislation?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Not at all, Mr. Speaker. The authority for doing this is in the Standing Orders, which provide that on one day a year, we can move to have extended hours for the last two weeks of our sitting. We have been adopting the approach of running Parliament in a productive, hard-working, orderly fashion, where there is certainty and we actually come to decisions.

Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, is a perfect example. Through our measures and the use of time allocation we have been able to ensure that we had the longest debate ever on a budget implementation bill, certainly the longest in the past two decades but probably ever. Similarly, we have also had the longest consideration in committee, not counting the subcommittee that was established. We are not interested in limiting debate. We are happy to have lots of debate and we have ensured that for some of the bills, some of the priority ones I listed like copyright. There has been far more debate in this Parliament to get to the same stages of bills than in previous Parliaments when the bills passed much sooner.

This is not our concern. Our concern is that we make decisions. That is what we were sent here to do. Canadians voted for us and said they wanted us to go to Parliament, address the important questions, debate them and make decisions on them. That is what we are asking the House to do: actually make decisions on the bills before us so that Canadians can benefit from those changes.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting that the government House leader, in his remarks, asked us to do what he believes is in Canadians' best interest. The Liberal Party of Canada has been doing just that.

*Routine Proceedings*

One could ask why the government House leader is not behaving in a fashion fitting for this House. When he asks us to do what is in the best interest of Canadians, how would he, for example, defend the government's approach in dealing with Bill C-38, the budget legislation?

He complains that the opposition wants to debate the bill and have it in committee. However, it should come as no surprise to the government House leader that this is the single largest budget bill ever presented to this House. It is indeed unprecedented. The amount of legislation that is being brought into the bill through the back door is unprecedented. That is why it needs to be thoroughly debated.

The work ethic of the members of the Liberal caucus is second to no other caucus inside this chamber. We are prepared to debate the bill and other bills that are important to Canadians. We are prepared to challenge the government through amending legislation and forcing votes, to try to get the government to recognize the responsibility that it has to Canadians.

I do not shy away from work in this House. I wonder if the government House leader would make a commitment in this chamber to sit in this chamber as long as I do in order to see this bill pass. Surely to goodness he would be open to sitting as often as I do in the chamber to ensure the issues are being addressed and that Canadians are put first. Will he make a commitment to sit in the chamber as long as I do?

• (1540)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, when Canadians reflect on the opposition parties in Ottawa today, the reason that they often conclude what we see mostly are partisan games from the opposition is that normally the member would be standing up complaining that he does not have enough time to debate. Now, faced with a motion to provide more time for debate, the opposition parties, both of them, indicate that they have a problem with that motion. I find that irony tells us everything we need to know about the motives of the opposition party members in how they approach things.

Our approach, as the hon. member talked about C-38, is to take a look at what is important for Canadians. What they are concerned about most these days is job creation, economic growth and long-term prosperity. We brought forward a legislative agenda, including our budget implementation act, to deliver on things like a tax credit for small business job creation; additional investment in skills development, research and innovation; additional opportunities to harness our natural resource advantages; a way of making sure that we continue to have the most skilled workforce in the world; and bringing forward that comprehensive economic plan, subjecting it to the longest debate in decades in Parliament, the longest committee consideration, but also ensuring that we move forward with real decisions.

The opposition's response is to look for delay and obstruction tactics. It is not to talk about the substance of it, but simply to delay and play games. However, we want to deliver real results and focus on the substance of the economy for the benefit of Canadians.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in answer to one of my colleague's questions, I think the hon. colleague on the other side said that Canadians send us here to make decisions. That is true. However, Canadians also have an official opposition

which is an important feature of our British parliamentary system to hold the government to account and to make sure that decisions that are not well considered or that may be wrong can be caught. That is why debate is so important.

Government members keep saying over and over that we have had 70 hours of debate, the longest debate in decades. Of course, the difference is that this is an unprecedented type of budget bill. Canadians have not seen a bill like this that would amend 70 different acts. We are talking about one hour of debate for each act. That is 60 minutes of debate for each act that would be fundamentally altered, changed or in some cases abolished. That is not a lot of debate. It is not sufficient debate.

The decisions that would take protecting fish habitat out of the Fisheries Act, or raising the age of old age security from 65 to 67, or changes to EI that would profoundly affect people who live in rural areas, are the kinds of decisions that Canadians want us parliamentarians to take in a measured, thoughtful way.

The Prime Minister said on April 18, 2005, "When a government starts trying to cancel dissent or avoid dissent is frankly when it's rapidly losing its moral authority to govern".

Does the member see any applicability of that comment to today as his government tries to ram through a Trojan Horse budget bill with insufficient debate?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just spoke about the merits of more debate. I trust that he will support this motion, because that is what this motion is about, allowing more debate until midnight every night in this House.

We talked about accommodating dissent. What will that mean? It will mean a lot of opportunity for him to put his dissent on the record. That is what we want to see, but we also want to see decisions get made, and that has been our approach in governing.

We also want to see that the decisions that are made are made, most importantly, on the priorities for Canadians, and that is the economy, job creation and economic growth. That does not lend itself to simply the budget implementation act, which has been the subject of the longest debate in decades of such a bill in this House.

It also extends to other important economic measures we would like to see passed, things like opening new markets to Canadians goods and services, things like our free trade agreement with Jordan and our free trade agreement with Panama. I suspect that member does not support the free trade agreement with Panama. I suspect he wants to see it opposed. I suspect that is why he does not want to see more hours for debate on that item in this House, even though it will mean jobs for Canadians.

• (1545)

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we have this debate today about extending hours, because we cannot look at this particular motion in isolation from everything that has happened in the past year since the election, under this Conservative government.

*Routine Proceedings*

I would begin my remarks by saying that I think a measure of a government is how it represents and respects the institution it operates within. By and large, certainly a majority government controls that institution. Therefore, how the government actually operates on a day-to-day basis and operates overall in terms of respecting the opinions of opposition, of members of the public, of committees, of the structures and the vehicles that we have, is a very important criterion in terms of how one looks at how a government is performing, whether it is the current Conservative government, a majority government or former governments. One has to look at this motion today in that context.

I mentioned in my remarks earlier that we have seen the government now bring in time allocation possibly 20 to 24 times on different bills. Time is a very valuable commodity. It is something by which we all operate. We understand the importance of it. I do find it incredibly ironic that, on the one hand, we have a government that has been doing everything it can to restrict the time we have for debate, for example, on Bill C-38, but on the other hand it is looking for an expansion of time in the next two weeks because it wants to get everything else through. This is really very disrespectful of the process we have in Parliament and is disrespectful of the engagement that members of Parliament want to have.

Bill Blaikie, who was the former member for Elmwood—Transcona, actually was the dean of the House. He was a very long-standing member of the House of Commons for more than 20 years. I remember speaking with Bill Blaikie on many occasions and getting a sense of how much the procedures had changed in this place, how much the rules had been bent, managed and finessed to basically minimize and restrict what members of Parliament can do.

We have to look at this issue over the longer term. We have to look at how much has been cut out already. Whether it is the right to have ongoing debate or the rules of the House generally, there has been so much undermining of the democratic process in this place. When we look at this motion today and we look at the underlying intent that motion has, which is to basically control the government agenda and to do everything it can to push through what it believes is necessary, then we can see that this place begins to be diminished. Its role and the role we have as individual members of Parliament begins to be diminished.

I remember, back in 1998 or 1999, the Reform Party of the day bringing in 472 amendments on the Nisga'a treaty. It is curious though that the Conservatives seemed to have no problem then in insisting that there had to be proper debate and a proper process. In fact, they used it. They were very opposed to that treaty. I remember voting. I think it was about 48 hours straight when we voted on those 472 amendments to the Nisga'a treaty in British Columbia. They seem to have forgotten all of that. They seem to have forgotten the process and the need to have some sort of equilibrium in this place. It has now become a very heavy-handed measure that it uses. That is what we are seeing today with this motion.

If we add on other examples, such as gag orders to employees, this is no longer a place where even people who work in different departments of the federal government are free to express an opinion. The gag orders are out there to shut down, to be silent and to self-censor. It all speaks to a pattern of incredible control. It speaks to a pattern of undermining the democratic process.

● (1550)

All opposition parties have a responsibility to hold the government to account. My hon. colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley, the NDP House leader, in his earlier intervention on a point of privilege made the point well that by blocking information to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, by withholding information to parliamentarians, we are impeding the proper functioning of a democratic process.

When we put all of that together, we can begin to see we have a government that is arrogant in its approach and dismissive of any opposition. That speaks badly to our democratic process as a whole.

We have seen unbelievable opposition to Bill C-38. We heard the government House leader say earlier that this is the longest debate we have ever had. Seven days at second reading on a bill that would have so much impact on almost every aspect of anyone's life in Canada, amending more than 70 pieces of legislation, is the equivalent to having one day of debate for 10 different pieces of legislation. I do not think anybody could characterize that as any kind of adequate or substantive debate.

We are not only opposed to the motion and all of the processes that are unfolding in such a high-handed way by the Conservative government; we are also dealing with the substance. We are also opposed to the process of ramming through all of these bills because the substance of what is contained in the legislation is critical. It is important that people understand what all of these changes are about. We have been pressing that day after day in question period and in committee, where our team did an incredible job of bringing forward amendments.

The list of changes and their impacts is just unbelievable. We have heard about changes to food safety inspection and EI. The government is basically rewriting the way EI will operate. What is worse is that it will be under the complete control of the minister.

We are debating changes in Bill C-38 that would give the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development huge powers to make regulations and unilateral changes to the employment insurance system. This is particularly offensive because, as we know, the employment insurance system is based on contributions from workers and employers. It is a system that people rely on when they need it. Yet the wholesale changes that we know are coming, with respect to what is considered suitable employment, how far one has to travel, the wages that are involved, are all substantive changes. The ability to examine even that one piece in Bill C-38 has been minimal.

We also heard earlier today from the member for Halifax, who raised a question in question period, as she has done for many days both here and in committee, about the changes to environmental assessments. Today in question period she noted that Bill C-38 would, with one clause, change the whole environmental assessment procedure in Canada. The bill would basically bring in a whole new system. In normal terms over the history of Parliament, these are changes that would have intense scrutiny, each and every one of them.



*Routine Proceedings*

Scrapping the director general of CSIS, what is all that about? Why is that being allowed to happen? What about the gutting of the Fisheries Act?

What about weakening foreign ownership rules on telecommunications? People who work in this industry, not the big corporations, are hugely concerned that buried in Bill C-38 are significant changes to foreign ownership rules that would make it much easier for corporations from abroad to come into Canada and take greater control over our telecommunications industry. That is something that requires substantive examination, but it is buried in the bill.

● (1555)

We have the cuts to health services for refugees. This one only came out more recently and now there is a huge outcry across the country about what the impact would be for refugees. We hear the talking points from the government members saying that refugees will not get anything more than anybody else. However, the loss of some of these medical services would have a significant impact upon people's lives.

However, do we get time to examine this? I do not think so because again this is something that is being rammed through.

The government House leader mentioned some of the other legislation that his government wants to move through if the motion to extend the hours passes, which, of course, it has the votes to do. It is very possible that, with some of these bills with which other parties in Parliament agree with, there may be some agreement to have a good debate and to see the passage of those bills. That is something that we have done for many years where there is co-operation, where there is some dialogue, conversation, that we can actually come to an agreement. It seems to me that is the way we should be conducting our business. We should be allowing the House leaders to meet to figure out, where there is some agreement, which bills can go through, because there may well be agreement that there has been adequate discussion and that would be a timely and proper thing to do.

However, I think it is wrong to lay down a whole list of probably 15 or more bills and say that in the next two weeks we will sit until midnight, that we will ram all these bills through no matter what anybody thinks and no matter the length of debate. I know the Conservatives will use the argument that we can debate it all we want but I think the central point that we need to make about this motion is that it is not intended to allow substantive debate on these bills, whether there are 6 or 10 or 15. The purpose is to allow the government to ram them through. I will bet my bottom dollar that it will now accompany this extension of hours, if it gets it, with time allocation.

I again come back to my first point, which is that on the one hand, the government is both restricting debate on Bill C-38 and other bills and it is also creating time for further debate so that it can also restrict debate to get the bills through. This is what we have come to. I have been in this Parliament now 15 years, through six elections. I have seen minority Parliaments and majority governments. I have seen how this operates. I know that if there is that process of some dialogue, goodwill, respect and trust, having been a House leader for

eight years as well, we can arrive at a consideration and an agreement about the House agenda. We have the capacity to do that.

However, when the government is so disrespectful of both the process and the substance and has an agenda that it just wants to ram through in the closing weeks of Parliament, all I can say is that we need to do our job and our job is to hold the government to account. Our job is to ensure that there is substantive and proper examination of all the bills before the House. We owe that to our constituents and to the public in general. I can tell from the emails that I am receiving and the stuff that is on Facebook that people are truly alarmed at the government's method of dealing, in particular, with Bill C-38.

People are only just beginning to understand the comprehensiveness and the far-reaching impact that the bill would have. This notion that it has had the longest debate ever is just nonsense. We need to look at what is in the bill. We need to know all of the legislation that it is trying to change. We need to know that none of that has been properly examined.

● (1600)

I do find that the government, in putting forward this motion today, is, regrettably, just a continuation of the arrogance it has displayed. It is a continuation of a disrespect of this place. It is a pattern of just wanting to get something through at any cost.

I feel very proud that the NDP, the official opposition, has spoken out very strongly. All of the amendments we have for Bill C-38, which will be voted on this week, are a reflection of the opposition that exists in this country. They are not just spurious amendments. These amendments are a reflection of what it is we are hearing from Canadians.

It is incredibly disappointing that the government is refusing to budge even an inch to look at splitting the bill or to look at ways to manage the bill so that there is proper debate. We have not seen the government willing to move anything on that front. That is a real indication, unfortunately, of where the Conservatives are at.

We will not be supporting the motion, not because we do not want to be here at night to debate. We are quite happy to do that. We are good at it. We would be happy to debate until midnight. However, we need to look at the intent of the motion and we know full well that the intent of the motion to extend the hours is so the government can bring in further time allocation to ram through Bill C-38, plus a dozen or more other pieces of legislation.

That is offensive. It is disrespectful of this Parliament. It is something that we do not think can be unchallenged, and it is for that reason that we oppose the motion.

I would like to move an amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by replacing the words "Friday, June 22" with the following: "Thursday, June 21".

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

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, I was in Winnipeg. I have found that as more and more Canadians become aware of what Bill C-38 is all about there is a great deal of resistance. We are starting to see its quite significant presence on the Internet as more and more Canadians are starting to react to finding out what the government has done with regard to that specific bill.

I would ask my colleague from the New Democratic Party how she feels Canadians as a whole are reacting to Bill C-38 specifically.

My interpretation is that the more people find out about it the more upset they are. I think the government would do well to recognize how offensive the bill is to our democratic system and to Canadians as a whole. The government would be well advised to go back to the drawing board, in essence, on this bill and to bring in a normal budget implementation bill that would take away a lot of the amendments proposing to significantly change legislation, such as our environment act.

• (1605)

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, there is just no two ways about it. The more people find out about Bill C-38, the omnibus budget bill, the more they hate it and the more the government is intent on getting it through the House and out of the way. This is what this is about.

I attended a public forum with some of my colleagues in Regina a couple of weeks ago and that was when information about the bill was just beginning to come out in a way that people were asking what was going on in Ottawa and what was all the stuff in the bill. When we started listing for them all the different pieces of legislation and the issues they would impact, whether it was pensions, the environment, health care or first nations, people's jaws were dropping.

There is a critical mass of people across the country, whether in organized groups or individuals, who are aghast at the methodology that the government is using, which, of course, is why the government now wants extended hours. It wants to finish things off and get the bills through, something that we oppose.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat curious and almost passing strange that the deputy leader of the official opposition would bring forward an amendment calling for debate to be curtailed by a full day. I say that because, in almost every other parliamentary session I have been in, along with the member opposite, the NDP has consistently tried to promote a narrative that it is here to do the work on behalf of all Canadians and will work here until the very last moment. Now it seems to be saying that it wants to get out early.

I would also point out for my colleague and friend that, as she well knows having been a former House leader herself, in years past this has been a practice among the House leaders. The House leaders would determine if there were pieces of legislation that the government had that the opposition might find its way to support and, if such an arrangement could be made, then perhaps there could be an accommodation to allow Parliament to rise a few hours or a day early.

I find it curious that, with this amendment, the NDP is trying to force Parliament to curtail debate. I wonder if the member would comment on that. Why has the NDP suddenly changed its mind about debating until the bitter end and now, seemingly, wants to get out of this place at least a day early?

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, in my remarks earlier, I mentioned that it was very important that there be good faith discussions and agreement among the House leaders. One hopes that is what happens so that we would not be in a position of having this motion. However, that has to begin somewhere and it is with the government, which has the majority, showing that it is willing to work in good faith with other parties. However, that has now become very difficult.

In terms of the amendment, I would point out that it is the government's motion that we are responding to and the government's motion does not include Friday, June 15. We are not saying that we will not be here until the end of the session. Of course we are. This is about the extended hours. The government itself has said that it does not include June 15 and we put forward an amendment on that basis.

• (1610)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, when the government House leader claims that the government is suddenly providing additional hours for debate and proper study of the bill, at least in the case of Bill C-38, his mouth should feel as though it is full of ashes to say something like that. We have seen the torching of environmental legislation by it being rammed through at second reading and the committee process that followed.

I heard the hon. member on the Conservative benches say that this bill has received more study than ever. I worked on the passage of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act that, by Bill C-38, would be repealed. It was taken through the Privy Council Office in 1987 for permission to draft. It was finally tabled before the House and passed, but did not get royal assent until 1994. In my experience, it takes years to bring forward good environmental legislation and it takes weeks to bring out a wrecking ball.

I do not see how, at this point, being told that sitting until midnight for the two days left at report stage provides any real content to the debate.

Does my hon. friend from Vancouver East get any sense that the Conservatives are willing to negotiate to bring Bill C-38 to a conclusion that includes taking on amendments?

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her comments and for giving us some idea of how long it took to deal with the original Canadian Environmental Assessment Act in 1987 and what a substantive process that was.

The member is entirely correct that what are seeing here, basically with the stroke of a pen or a majority vote, is that these things are just gone. They are just cut out. I think that is what makes us so concerned and why we challenge so much of what is going on.

I would say that I am not privy to all of the discussions, but nothing that I have seen or that any of us has seen has given us any indication that the Conservative government has been willing to step back a little, reflect on what the bill will do or hear what Canadians have been saying.

*Routine Proceedings*

In fact, it is really disturbing that the government has not consulted anybody, whether on EI changes or environmental changes. It has not consulted the people who are going to be impacted. It is just ramming it through, and that is completely wrong.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments. As she mentioned, she has been an MP for 15 years. She has seen more than one government do things that are harmful to Canadians.

What is interesting is the argument about the number of hours of debate and the number of witnesses that have been heard in committee. It is somewhat difficult to make a comparison because there is nothing comparable. In fact, this is the first time that we have seen a bill of this scope, that would make so many changes to such unrelated aspects of society. As the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said, it would require months and years of work to implement this bill and to put in place the institutions that are such a part of our identity and of the work we want to do.

What we all need to remember here is that it is not because we are not willing to work. However, we are wondering why the government is extending the hours of the House to ram through this bill, when we could be out there listening to the comments that are still being made about how this bill is bad for society.

I would just like to allow my colleague to speak a bit more about this in order to show the extent to which the NDP, unlike the government, has consulted the people who will be affected by the changes.

[*English*]

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, the member is entirely correct. The NDP went to extraordinary lengths to hold budget hearings, both here in Ottawa and right across the country.

When we realized that the government was intent on just pushing this measure through at any cost, we decided that we had to get out there and hear from people, and we did just that. We got a huge response from people, and I think it has helped to generate people's awareness about this bill and given visibility to what is in the bill.

I agree with the member that this is not an issue of whether we come here at 10 or 11 o'clock at night. We have shown on so many different occasions, whether on back-to-work legislation or in any debate we have had, that we are totally engaged in doing our work in this place. We take it very seriously.

What we are responding to with this motion is the intent behind it. I think it is just an illusion that somehow we are going to have more debate on this particular bill and other pieces of legislation.

This is all about creating space to then allow for more time allocation. Let us make no mistake about that. We absolutely know what the number is and we know what is going on here. I want to say very clearly that what we are calling for is substantive debate, not only of Bill C-38 but also of the other pieces of legislation that may come forward, so that we can have a thorough oversight and investigation into all of these elements, particularly in Bill C-38.

This is the most important thing that we should be doing, and the government has absolutely refused to respond to it.

●(1615)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand to speak to this motion, a motion by which I am not totally surprised. One could have anticipated it, given the record of the government and its inability to negotiate in good faith.

Let me start by saying that I do not have a great deal of legislative experience here in the House of Commons, but I do bring with me quite a bit of experience from the Manitoba legislature. I like to think that a lot of the principles are the same. There are different issues and so forth, but I have a fairly good understanding of the principles of how a chamber works and how House leaders should be working with each other to try to get through legislative agendas. I have been doing it for 20 years now.

I would like to focus my first few minutes on the fact that we need to look at why we are in the situation we find ourselves in today. The government, more than any other government, has set a record on time allocation. It brings in time allocation in order to pass its legislative agenda. It is almost becoming standard process, as opposed to sitting down with opposition parties.

The Conservatives present their legislation to the House. They pick a bill, wait a day and then bring in time allocation in expectation that it will pass. They do not have to consult. I think that is some sort of pent-up anger from the minority days or something of that nature, and we are seeing a very irresponsible, anti-democratic Reform Conservative majority government that has been destructive to process inside the House of Commons.

I have worked with majority government in the past, when there were NDP House leaders and Progressive Conservative House leaders. On all occasions, I have had the opportunity to sit in the House leader's office or in a committee room, and the government members will say, "Here is what we are looking at as a legislative agenda. Here are the important bills that we want to get passed over the next number of months". Opposition members will then say, "We want to have *x* number of hours of debate on this particular bill because it is controversial legislation and we feel it needs to be debated. It has a higher priority for debate."

The point is that there is a sense of cooperation to make sure that what is taking place on the floor of the legislative assembly, or in this case the House of Commons, is being debated fairly.

That is not to say I have never witnessed closure of some form or another inside the Manitoba legislature. That happened, and whether it was the NDP or Progressive Conservatives, it happened. It is a tool that is there, and I believe political parties of all stripes have at times had to go into that tool box.

*Routine Proceedings*

However, more often than not I have witnessed agreements to go into extended sitting hours, and that is what this motion is all about. House leaders say they need more time to get something passed, but what has amazed me in my year and a half in the House is the lack of goodwill, the lack of trust coming from the government side in terms of trying to get things through the House of Commons in a fair and appropriate fashion.

● (1620)

I can recall the Canadian Wheat Board legislation that was put through in this session. This huge piece of legislation impacted 30,000 or 40,000 prairie farmers. We have a law in place that says that the Prime Minister has a responsibility to ensure a plebiscite for the farmers. The plebiscite is still in the court process, but the government brought in legislation that it expects MPs to pass without the farmers even having the plebiscite, a right that the law in essence guaranteed them. It guaranteed that they should have a vote because of the changes to the wheat board.

We in the Liberal Party opposed what the government was doing. We opposed the fashion with which it was bringing in legislation. What did the government do? As it has done 20 other times, which is a record, the government brought in time allocation. It has brought in time allocation 25 times, I believe.

What does time allocation do? In essence, it prevents debate and allows the government to rush through legislation. By doing that, the government is doing a disservice to Canadians and it is not respecting the House.

I do not know what the tradition has been—three, four, five times a year—but I do know that no other government has brought in time allocation 25 times in one year. That has to be record. It could be a Commonwealth record, as far as I know. That is what is wrong with the Conservative government.

I am not fearful of sitting until midnight. I have sat around the clock before. I have sat in committees before.

The government House leader says we have had eight or ten hours of debate. This is a budget bill, and we are spending over \$250 billion. The Manitoba legislature had 240 hours of line-by-line debate on estimates to spend \$6 billion. That was only on a \$6 billion budget at that time. Those 240 hours have been reduced somewhat, and the amount of money that the province of Manitoba spends has changed, but everything has to be put into its proper perspective.

Bill C-38 has been termed the “Trojan Horse” as a budget bill because 70 laws would be changed, amended or deleted, and all through the back door. Is there any wonder that all these little red flags are shooting up all over the place the more Canadians find out about it? Canadians realize that what is happening here is wrong.

It goes beyond the NDP and the Liberals. I saw the YouTube clip in which a Conservative backbencher was sharing with an intimate group of constituents that a number of Conservatives have some trouble with the legislation, but that they do not have any choice. I would suggest that there is a choice, and that choice needs to be looked at.

This is unprecedented. The size of the legislation and its profound environmental impact are significant.

The motion we are dealing with does not deal just with Bill C-38. It deals with a wide variety of pieces of legislation. There is no secret here. We know the government's intentions. It is going to bring in more time allocation, because the government House leader has not been able to negotiate. He has not been able to sit down and work things through.

The budget bill would have a profound impact on the environment. Why did the government choose to put something like that in a budget bill?

● (1625)

I do not know how many of my Atlantic colleagues have raised the EI changes in question period to try to get the government to wake up on the employment insurance issue. This is costing industry in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and all over Canada. We have industries that are being put in jeopardy because of what is being sneaked through the back door with this legislation. There would be reforms to EI and pensions.

I have never had as much interest for signing petitions as I have had on the pension issue. Whether here or in my previous life as an MLA, I have submitted a few petitions over the years, but never with as much interest as on the pension issue. Canadians feel very passionate about our social programs. Increasing the retirement age from 65 to 67 is just a dumb idea and Canadians do not support it.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Yes, they do.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** A member from across the way says that they do. He better canvass his constituents because it will become an election issue. The Liberal Party will take that issue to the polls.

At the end of the day, the residents of Winnipeg North, and I do not think they are too far off from those in the rest of Canada, are very upset and concerned about the pension issue. They want to have that option to retire at age 65. They believe in that program.

Let us take a look at the micro-scales on the impact of the budget bill.

We have immigration offices that are being closed down, hundreds of CIC workers are being taken out and individuals who are in need of these services are impacted.

We can talk about search and rescue and the impact the budget bill will have on it, with offices being relocated or closed down. There are many different issues.

Earlier today I received some correspondence regarding the Riel House in the city of Winnipeg. Louis Riel was one of the founders of Confederation as far as many Manitobans and Francophone are concerned, but that house is now in jeopardy.

There are so many issues that are related to Bill C-38. We have to look at all the other issues. The government House leader said, the Conservatives had other legislation that they wanted to get passed, and he then started to list off more legislation. We welcome the opportunity to debate and have proposed legislation go to committee.

*Routine Proceedings*

We are interested in those important issues on which Canadians want parliamentarians to work. It was the Liberal Party that first raised the issue in last fall's session that the number one priority for Canadians was jobs, jobs, jobs. Unemployed people are concerned about being able to provide for their family and themselves. We have recognized the importance of the economy.

We are prepared to do whatever it takes to ensure that we move forward in a positive way and that we let the government know what the concerns are. Last fall, I spent a lot of time talking about jobs. However, in the last few weeks it seems I have been talking more and more about process because I am concerned about what is happening inside the House. Many may see process as being somewhat of a dull issue, but it is far from that.

● (1630)

This is about democracy. This is about the rights of members of Parliament to really engage in discussion that is necessary, whether it is on the floor of the House of Commons or after a bill passes and goes to committee. We have to ensure that those rights are protected. There is an expectation, and I do not know about other members, I would assume so, that when we knock on doors and tell our constituents we are prepared to go to Ottawa to ensure their concerns are addressed, that we do so. I have always added that I want to bring Ottawa to Winnipeg.

The point is to ensure that the concerns of our constituents are addressed. That is why in this very short of period of time, when we talk about the extension of hours, I raise the issue of the budget and the seniors issue. I can talk about how this budget will impact health care. It has always been a very important issue, not only for residents of Winnipeg North but, I believe, all Canadians. A big issue has always been crime and safety in our streets, something that I have argued may even likely be the number one issue for Winnipeg North in the minds of a good percentage of my constituents, and for just reason. This is one of the reasons why I talk about that a great deal, and will continue to do so.

However, the motion that we ultimately will be asked to vote on is if the House should extend its sitting until midnight for the next period of time. I would feel so much better if the government House leader and the government's House leadership team would work with the opposition House leaders and their teams to see if in fact we could come up with some sort of compromise so Canadians would be served first and foremost.

It is interesting. The government House leader concluded his opening remarks on the motion by saying that we should put Canadians first. This would be a challenge that I would put to him, to put Canadians first.

I was provided with a quote that the government House leader actually made back in July 2005. It states:

A major reason I became politically active was because many in my family...lost their lives, or freedom at the hands of the Soviets or Nazis. I believe our democracy is fragile, and something we must cherish and defend.

This was something he apparently had on a website on July 5, 2005. He was talking about what was a sad day in the House of Commons.

I, like the government House leader, like to think I am a defender of our democratic system and our institutions. I believe it is important that as a House we work together to try to address the important issues of all Canadians.

The House leaders of all political parties inside this chamber play a very important role. If the House leaders do their job, then we are able to have an orderly ending to a session. There will be bills that will be opposed and the opposition will want to voice those concerns. We should not try to tie their hands. We have to allow, for those controversial bills, the opportunity for the opposition members to express themselves. That means not bringing in time allocation as often as the current government has. It means to allow the committees to do the work they need to do so these issues are addressed in a timely fashion.

I look forward in the future to the government House leader working with opposition House leaders in an attempt to have more orderly windup sessions.

● (1635)

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening intently to many of his remarks. Since I will be addressing this place in a few moments on the government side, much of what my colleague mentioned I will be addressing as well, particularly the working relationship among House leaders of all political parties. Although I dispute some of the analysis done by my friend, I certainly will speak to the relationship that I believe needs to be a healthy one for a good, functioning democracy in this place.

I want to point out one mistake, hopefully an inadvertent mistake, in some of the comments made earlier in his presentation, and that was about the Canadian Wheat Board. The member for Winnipeg North continues to say, as do many of his colleagues, that the government was obligated to hold a plebiscite before changes made to the Canadian Wheat Board. That, in fact, is not true. Section 47 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act specifically states that if a government were planning to eliminate either wheat or barley from the Canadian Wheat Board, then a plebiscite would be needed. We did not do that. We simply changed the act so the Canadian Wheat Board is now a voluntary mechanism. It controls both wheat and barley. Canadian farmers, being some of the smartest businesspeople in Canada, know that if they will get a better product at a better price by going through the Canadian Wheat Board, they will continue to use it. That is all we have done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before going back to the hon. member for Winnipeg North, I would remind all members of the matter that is before the House. The hon. member for Winnipeg North raised this matter and it has been questioned, but I would encourage all members to make comments relevant to the matter before us.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat relevant in the sense that we are now dealing with a motion to extend sitting time. The bill that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons made reference to was in fact a time allocated bill because the government wanted to rush it through.

*Routine Proceedings*

Having said that, where the member is wrong is that if he were to canvass the 20,000-plus prairie farmers who voted in a referendum, he would find that the vast majority of them believed that they had a right to a plebiscite. In fact, it is in court today. It is not as simple as he tried to portray it. There is a valid argument that thousands of prairie farmers have made that the government did not have the right to bring in that legislation.

It makes my point in the sense that there is legislation that is brought through the House and there will be controversial legislation that has to be thoroughly debated and sent to committee. This is critically important. When House leaders negotiate, they recognize that, but they equally recognize legislation that is not as important, does not require as much debate and will pass through the system more quickly. The key is that House leaders need to be prepared, in good faith, to sit at the table and set a legislative agenda so things can happen in a more timely way. If they cannot do it in year one after an election, they will find it more difficult in the years to follow. Now is the time for us to be trying to build a sense of co-operation going forward.

● (1640)

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the comments he just made. I sit on a committee with him and really appreciate his thoughtful approach. The fact is that he does come across as one who wants to find solutions. I heard that in his speech today. This is not about not wanting to sit until midnight or 2:00, 3:00, 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning. We have done that in the past. I have an incredible capacity to stay up, day in and day out, for quite a number of days and still sound semi-coherent. However, that is beside the point.

The question I have for my colleague who just spoke is: What are some of the key concerns he has with this Trojan Horse bill? What are the key elements that give him cause for concern that have not been debated in as fulsome a way as they should be? We feel that this new process that the government is suggesting is just another attempt at ramming things through rather than a thoughtful debate.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is that, instead of being 400-plus pages that affect 70 acts and in some cases delete some of them, Bill C-38, the budget bill, likely could just as easily have been 14, 15, or even more substantial pieces of legislation. That is why Canadians need to be concerned with where the limit is. If the government says it is going to have a “long live Canada” budget bill, that means it could incorporate every piece of legislation it wants to put in in any given year and say it is now the budget implementation bill, and it could affect even more than this one does. It is a very dangerous direction we are going in today with Bill C-38.

What offends me most is that the government somehow accumulated the courage, and courage is probably not the right word on this. I would never have thought it would bring in a bill like this that incorporates so many changes in so many different ways in one bill, a budget bill. I believe it is dishonest and anti-democratic. I truly believe there are a number of Conservative members in the House who would be voting against Bill C-38, if there were a free vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** 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 St. John's East, National Defence; the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé, Canada Revenue Agency; and the hon. member for Western Arctic, the environment.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to stand here and debate some of my more learned colleagues on the motion we have before us, which is of course to extend debate until midnight over the course of the next two weeks.

Standing Order 27 is the standing order we are talking about here. I should say that this standing order, of course, has been utilized many times in the past. In fact I recall when we first formed government in 2006. I believe the first opportunity we had to utilize Standing Order 27 and extend debate was in 2007. Since that time we have not had extended debate.

We have not had extended sitting hours for the last two weeks of a Parliament, but that is due to a number of different factors. For a couple of years, 2008, 2009, I believe it was just an agreement made between parties that it would not be required. I also believe there was an implied threat from members of the opposition during those minority government years that if our government had brought the motion forward, it would have been defeated.

There is a reason why Standing Order 27 was incorporated to begin with, and that is to allow the government of the day to bring forward pieces of legislation in an attempt to get them passed before that Parliament rose for the summer. It is always in the last two weeks of a parliamentary session, heading into the summer months, that this ability of a government to bring forward a motion for extended sitting hours is there.

I find it interesting that members of the opposition, particularly members of the official opposition, the NDP, have stated that they will be opposing our motion for extended sitting hours. In fact I always find that disingenuous on behalf of the opposition members, because they have consistently stated that they want more debate time. On almost every single piece of legislation we have introduced in this Parliament and previous parliaments, the NDP has consistently stated it wants more debate time.

We are now offering more debate time on several bills that are on our legislative calendar, yet faced with the opportunity for increased debate, enhanced scrutiny, the NDP says no. The NDP members do not want to sit the extra hours each and every night to debate bills.

I do not know if we have heard nothing but loose lips talking in previous months and previous years, from the NDP, if in fact it really did not want increased debate all these years, or if the NDP is actually telling the truth right now when it says it opposes the increased debate because it disagrees fundamentally with the government on Bill C-38.

I find it strange that the NDP uses that argument when we in fact have been debating Bill C-38. The opposition obviously has seen enough of the bill to be able to introduce more than 1,000 amendments originally, pared down to 871 amendments.

*Routine Proceedings*

On one hand, again, we see this disconnect between reality and what the official opposition is stating publicly, and that is simply this: if it did not have enough information about Bill C-38 to begin with, how in the world could it have then brought forward 1,000 amendments? It does not seem to make sense to me that it would have a lack of information about what is contained in Bill C-38 but still have the ability to bring forward more than 1,000 amendments. It must have some knowledge of what is contained in Bill C-38, or else how could it have brought forward any amendments?

We know, of course, that the reality is simply this: opposition members, both on the NDP benches and the Liberal benches, are not looking for more reasoned debate on any piece of legislation that our government has brought forward. They are simply trying to delay implementation of each and every piece of legislation we bring forward.

That is readily apparent, and not only on Bill C-38 but on some of the other pieces of legislation in which we wish to engage the opposition in debate over the course of the next two weeks. There is Canada-Jordan free trade, Canada-Panama free trade and the modernization of the Copyright Act.

• (1645)

All these legislative initiatives were brought forward not only a few weeks ago but, in some cases, years ago. We have been engaging the opposition in debate on some of these matters for literally years, but to no avail. Something I find very troubling is that I hear members of the opposition state that they wish to have meaningful debate and they want to have co-operation with all parties in this place, yet they consistently go out of their way to try to inhibit legislation from passing.

I understand. I get what an opposition does, and I certainly agree that it is there to hold the government to account. I understand that the opposition members' primary function is to oppose government legislation. However, they cannot then say they want to work with the government to bring legislation to fruition if in fact their primary motive is simply to kill the bill, with apologies to Quentin Tarantino.

The government is attempting to bring forward legislation in a timely fashion and to ensure we have adequate debate. However, members of the opposition have consistently demonstrated that they wish nothing more than to delay, obfuscate and do anything in their power, through procedural tactics like hoist bills and other delaying tactics, to prevent our government from passing legislation. That is okay. If that is what they consider to be their primary function in this place, we will deal with that.

However, that is the reason, more than anything else, that we have brought forward time allocation on a number of occasions now. I will also point out to those who may be paying attention to this debate, who are not completely familiar with parliamentary procedures, that time allocation is a function used by many governments in previous years. It is a part of our Standing Order package that allows the government of the day to put a certain time allocation on a respective bill before it comes forward for debate at either second reading, report stage or third reading.

However, I will point out differences between our approach and those of governments in past years, particularly the previous Liberal

governments who used time allocation and closure far more frequently than our government and used to have a standard one day of debate on bills that they used to time allocate. Members of this place will know, if they have been paying attention, that is not the approach we have been taking. When we have brought forward time allocation, we have done so in a fashion that would allow for several days of debate after the time allocation motion has been brought forward. Again, contrast that with the previous Liberal government, which would bring forward time allocation motions and restrict the debate to one day and sometimes, as the record would show, to as few as three hours in some cases.

So the only reason we have been bringing forward time allocation on a number of bills is that the opposition members have demonstrated that they will do everything within their powers to delay implementation. If any government is faced with a situation where it has been demonstrated that the opposition will delay and obfuscate to the point of never allowing any legislation to pass, then the government has no recourse and no other option but to bring forward time allocation motions, and that is what we have been doing.

Of course, from a political standpoint the narrative that the opposition members, particularly the NDP, have been trying to weave is that if they can force our government into bringing forward time allocation motions it benefits them politically, by allowing them to stand up in this House and to go to political meetings and say, "This government is restricting debate; look at all the time allocation motions it brought forward". However, what the opposition members are trying to do is run up the score. They are trying to force our government to bring forward time allocation motions on almost every piece of legislation because it feeds their narrative. That is the reality. Is it good politics? Perhaps. We will find that out.

• (1650)

What Canadians expect of any government is that legislation be passed and that it be passed in a timely fashion. That is what we are doing, more than anything else.

If we look at the number of days of debate, the number of hours of debate, the number of speeches presented in this House on debate with various pieces of legislation that we have time allocated, we would find on average that there has been more debate on a bill-by-bill basis than with any government in the last 20 years. The opposition members do not like that because it is the truth, but if they took the time to actually research what I am saying, they will find it is absolutely true.

We have many new members in this place, so I do not expect them to know all of the parliamentary history, but I would encourage them to please go back and look at legislation that previous Liberal governments brought forward and look not only at how many times time allocation was used but also at closure. I am assuming that the members opposite know the distinction between time allocation and closure.

The reality is simply this, that Canadians expect governments of the day, regardless of their political stripe, to pass legislation, because without that ability, no government can function.

*Routine Proceedings*

One of the problems in a minority government, which we all saw from time to time, is parliamentary gridlock. We reached an impasse where legislation simply would not pass because of the combined forces of the opposition blocking any attempt by this government to pass legislation in a timely fashion.

Obviously the dynamics have now changed: we have a majority government we are getting legislation through. Yet more needs to be done.

I will give four quick examples of what I consider to be critical pieces of legislation that Canadians would like to see our government act upon. I have mentioned them previously. One is the copyright modernization act, an act that has not been modernized for far too many years. We are on the cusp of finally passing that bill, but we need additional time to do so.

We have two more free trade agreements, one with Jordan and one with Panama, that will greatly enhance our economic ability to create jobs, to create wealth within our country. We need time, however, over the course of the next two weeks to get those bills properly debated and, hopefully, passed.

Of course, we have the pooled registered pension plans act that will provide, for the first time, to Canadians who are self-employed and do not currently have pensions the ability to opt into a pension plan, which will affect hundreds of thousands and actually millions of Canadians.

These are all extremely important pieces of legislation that Canadians want to see passed, which is all that we are trying to do, to ensure that over the course of the next two weeks before we rise for the summer, that at minimum these four pieces of critical legislation are passed.

Do we expect to get cooperation from the opposition? I will not prejudge that; I simply will not do that. I hope that the members opposite who have been speaking today in this debate, stating that they wish to cooperate with the government, are sincere in their comments, but time will tell.

I do want to mention the relationship, as I mentioned to my colleague, my friend from Winnipeg North, that should exist among House leaders. I, too, have been involved with the House leaders management team for the past number of years. In fact, I have been the parliamentary secretary to five different House leaders since we were first elected to government in 2006, and I can assure the members opposite, all members, that from time to time, while there may be acrimony and some hard feelings, I believe that on most occasions the House leaders of all parties, opposition and government together, do work together in a fairly collegial atmosphere.

There will also be times when all opposition parties and the government, through their House leaders and their House management teams, can agree on certain pieces of legislation that can be passed.

I will not tell any stories out of school, or break any confidential pact, because House leaders meetings of course are in camera and are confidential, but I can assure members opposite that I have been involved in previous years in negotiating when sessions end.

● (1655)

I do not want to give the impression to any Canadian that parliamentarians want to get out of here early and do not want to do the work they have been elected to do. However, from time to time, as we get close to an end of a parliamentary session, there is the opportunity for all parties to come together to try to agree on what legislation might be available for quick passage.

It is not uncommon, for example, for opposition parties to come forward during House leaders' discussions and ask what priority pieces of legislation the government has on its agenda. That is code of sorts, quite frankly, for what pieces of legislation the government wants passed before we get out of here for the summer. Maybe we could have some discussion; maybe we could find some common ground, some agreement. It has always worked well and I anticipate, or at least I certainly hope, that this opportunity over the course of two weeks will not disappoint me and that we will find common ground again.

I particularly want to point out that I agree with a comment by my friend from Winnipeg North a little earlier, that surely to goodness there could be the type of relationship among House leaders that allows for some legitimate debate on the length of time that bills need to be debated. I have had this conversation with the House leaders of both the Liberals and the NDP in months and years past. In a perfect world I would love to see a situation or the type of dynamic in play where on a relatively normal bill, a non-controversial bill, we could agree on an average length of debate. If we could agree, whether it is five days or ten days or so many hours, that would be the standard we would try to hold ourselves to.

Obviously there would be times where legislation that any government introduced would be opposed vigorously by the members of the opposition. We have clearly seen some of those in this session of Parliament, such as on the long gun registry and the Wheat Board, and there will be others. I can understand that, and I believe that the opposition members understand that those are the types of legislative initiatives where the opposition and the government will never find common ground. That is okay. That is the nature of democracy; that is the nature of Parliament. In those cases though, I still think that we could find some common ground to agree that if we are going to encounter vehement opposition, then what is a legitimate timeframe we can put on that debate. Perhaps it would not be as short as some of the more non-controversial pieces of legislation, but can we at least find some agreement to limit debate after a certain period of time, if we know that we will never find agreement between the opposite sides of the House?

That has been attempted. At times it has proven to be successful. I would like to see more of that type of dialogue between parties. However, where we cannot bridge that impasse, then we will find that the government has to use the levers at its disposal. We have been doing that, but I believe we have been doing that in a judicious manner.

I invite comments from opposition members to see if there are ways they would suggest for us to find even more enhanced cooperation between all parties in this place.



*Routine Proceedings*

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened attentively to the hon. member's presentation, with some admiration for his experience, his eloquence, and his ability to pass off half-truths as the whole truth. What more evidence do we need than this extension of sitting hours that we are being asked for? We are now being asked to believe that, finally, additional time is being allowed for debate in this House, but the list of bills that we are going to have to study keeps getting longer.

Let me do some simple calculations for those who are watching. Imagine we have one hour to debate one bill or two hours to debate five bills. In my opinion, the math can be done quite quickly, and everyone understands quite well that what is actually being proposed is once more a reduction in the time in which to debate each one of the bills that the government wants passed before the summer recess.

However, I am ready to listen to the proposals for a possible compromise on the amount of time allowed for various bills. I feel that there would be more chance of that if we had the feeling that we were listened to on at least one occasion, but really, that is extremely rare.

Is there a specific proposal on the table?

• (1705)

[*English*]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite feels that I have been speaking in half truths and trying to portray them as truths, and if he is willing to listen to anything I might say.

The reality is this: how can the member opposite say that the number of bills and the opportunities for debate are going to decrease when in fact we are increasing the hours per day for the next two weeks? We are proposing an extra five hours per day for the next two weeks. It seems to me that that would allow for more meaningful debate and more opportunities for compromise, or at least for some agreement. Frankly, I find it astonishing and quite confusing that the opposition would stand and say it is opposing increased hours for debate when it has in fact been saying for the last several months that it wants more time for debate.

There is a disconnect. I cannot see how it could possibly be bridged other than if the members of the opposition recognized what is known to all Canadians, that they are simply trying to delay legislation and not work together.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of quick comments and then a question.

First, I cannot resist commenting with regard to the time allocation debate. It is important to note that when the Liberal Party was in government, time allocation did not occur immediately after the introduction of bills, but often days after bills were introduced. When we take a look at the number of time allocation motions, I suspect that the entire Chrétien government, in its 10-plus years, did not bring in time allocation more than the Conservative government has in this last session since it acquired a majority. I am going to push that to the side right now.

The member offered a challenge. I love the idea. How do we pass, in a timely fashion, controversial legislation? Other jurisdictions, as an example, say that a controversial piece of legislation has to be introduced  $x$  number of days into a session and if it is not introduced before that time, time allocation is not allowed. Members have to make sure that it is done far enough in advance of the session winding down, for example, and then a minimum number of hours are established for debate before time application could be applied.

The point is that if there is a will among the House leaders and the House leadership team to sit down and negotiate in good faith, bills can get through the legislature, even the controversial ones, in which—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. I would remind all hon. members to keep an eye on the Chair when they are asking questions or making comments for some indication of time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I applaud the member for Winnipeg North for volunteering on behalf of his House management team that there be a solution, that we may be able to find some common ground; but, unfortunately, I have not been able to see that demonstrated yet.

Obviously, the members opposite will try to blame the government for the failure to find common ground on an appropriate length of time for debate. The government sees it quite differently. I know that from time to time, quite frequently in fact, our government has gone to the opposition and asked how many speakers will be standing on a particular bill and how much time it thinks it needs to speak on a certain bill. Unfortunately, many times the answer from the opposition benches has been nothing more than that they would like to see how it plays out.

I would love to find a system that works, but it takes two to tango. Unfortunately, to date we have not been able to find that compromise and that common ground. I can assure the member opposite, however, that we will continue to work as hard as we can to see if we can find common ground.

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I had some time this weekend to travel through my riding and I ran into some folks who always ask what Parliament is doing and what we are working on. I shared with them that we would again be talking about pooled registered pension plans this week and they asked, "Did you not finish that in the spring? Haven't you already talked about that?" They are quite amazed at how long it takes and how much conversation takes place. They also ask how I can sit and listen to the same things over and over again. I am all for great debate, but when the members opposite continue to get up one after the other and say exactly the same things, it does make me feel a bit weary.

I want to ask the member if he is hearing the same thing, that this is about getting the job done and being asked by people back home to come here and have good, earnest debate, but at some time to finish our job.

*Routine Proceedings*

• (1710)

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud my good friend for asking a tough but fair question. All kidding aside, I mentioned in my address earlier that Canadians do expect government, regardless of whether it be Conservative, Liberal, NDP or whatever government, to get legislation passed. That is why its members are elected. Unfortunately, we find far too many times that debate is just extended for the sake of debate, not for the sake of trying to improve a piece of legislation.

I know others share this view with me. I would love to see a system, such as other jurisdictions have, where we are not allowed to read a speech in debate. I do not mean any disrespect to any members. Members from all sides do this. I see them during debate and question period with written questions or a speech that somebody else has written which they read verbatim. We would have far more meaningful dialogue if more members did not use written texts. There are many here who do not, and I am one of them, but there are many opposite who do. Frankly, if we simply had a rule, such as other jurisdictions employ, wherein members were not allowed to read a speech, they would have to stand up and speak extemporaneously. The level of debate would increase significantly. Canadians would be the beneficiaries of that debate.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will ask my colleague a fair and hopefully tough question. I am sure he has a lot of experience in the House. There are many rules and procedures that he has talked about in this House.

One of the procedures or rules that I have learned from my friends the Conservatives is time allocation. They have certainly used it enough times. I know backwards and inside out how the motion is put together. My Liberal colleague talked earlier about how that is used to stop debate in the House. I will go even further. I think the Conservatives really do not want to talk about what is in Bill C-38 so we cannot get to the bottom of it.

Therefore, my question to my colleagues is this. What are they hiding? What do they have to hide that we cannot have a proper discussion in the House on Bill C-38?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The hon. parliamentary secretary. A short answer, please.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, all parties and all members use different techniques that are available to them. However, what I find more distressing and most undemocratic is this. Earlier this year when we introduced the budget, and I wish I could remember the name of his riding, the member who was the acting finance critic on behalf of the opposition used I think two and a half or three days of debate without allowing the Liberal opposition party members to put their views forward.

If we want to talk about preventing honest debate and dialogue among all parties, I would suggest that my friends opposite look in the mirror.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to speak on behalf of my party on this motion. I want to preface my remarks by saying I was hoping to have the opportunity to ask my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, a question. I, too, am amazed at how he can so

articulately outline the position of the government and make it so understandable and do it without notes. Unfortunately, I have not gained that opportunity. However, maybe with a few more years of sitting under his mentorship I will have some of that under my belt.

I am pleased to rise in support of the government's motion, pursuant to Standing Order 27, to extend the sitting hours of the House in the final two weeks before the summer adjournment. Later, I want to make a few general comments about why we need to extend the hours. Now, I would like to focus on the House rules as they relate to the ability of the government and the need of the government to implement this measure.

O'Brien and Bosc *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states on page 403:

Since 1982, and the advent of a fixed House of Commons calendar, the Standing Orders have provided for the extension of sitting hours during the last 10 sitting days in June.

O'Brien and Bosc further states, on pages 403 to 404:

In order to extend the hours of sitting in June, a motion, for which no notice is required, must be moved by a Minister during Routine Proceedings on the 10th sitting day preceding June 23. The motion, which must propose to extend sittings to a specific hour, but not necessarily for every day during that period, is subject to a maximum two-hour debate before the question is put by the Speaker.

Standing Order 27 is designed to provide the government with the option of seeking additional time before the summer adjournment for consideration by the House of important government priorities. This House has accomplished a lot this session, but there is more important work to do. Adopting the motion would provide further time for the House to debate important economic bills, like Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, which would benefit our constituents, before we return to our ridings this summer.

Earlier in the debate today, my colleague from Winnipeg North made a comment to the House leader, something to the effect he was challenging the House leader to be sure that the House leader stayed here in Parliament for the full extent of the debate that we would have during these sitting hours.

I would like to point out to those who may be watching that much of the work of a parliamentarian is done outside this House. Yes, it is important that we are here for debates, motions and votes. However, my colleague will know that much of the work of a parliamentarian has to happen outside this House. We go back to our offices here on Parliament Hill. There are emails to deal with, phone calls to deal with, stakeholder meetings that are required of us. All of these functions are part of a parliamentarian's duties.

Add to that the responsibility of a House leader and one could imagine that it would be impossible, and my colleague knows this, for the House leader to sit here at his desk all day long to engage in debate. There are other important obligations placed upon our House leader.

It is important to point out to Canadians who were expecting us to move ahead on many of these initiatives to think about some of the positions that the NDP members have taken over the past number of weeks. They have repeatedly complained of lack of time to debate the legislation that we put before them. And now, here we have before us an opportunity to extend the hours to give them more opportunity.

*Routine Proceedings*

Another point of irony in this whole debate is that during the debate on Bill C-38, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster used virtually 98% or more of the time available for all members to debate that bill. He used up all of that time, not allowing his colleagues, even the members of his own party, let alone the opposition, the opportunity to adequately enter into debate on that bill.

So, here we are, today, giving them the opportunity to extend those hours so that we can have important debate on the important legislation that we have tabled and they are saying, “No, we don't want to do that”. I think Canadians expect us to work until the job is done.

• (1715)

In these last six years that I have been a member of Parliament there are two things for which I am thankful. One is that I was raised on a farm and learned how to work hard and the other is that I learned how to work as a team member. Farmers realize that when it comes to spring planting season, they have to put in longer hours if the job is going to get done. When it comes to harvest in late summer or fall, farmers have to put in extra hours and extra resources may have to be called in. Canadians expect us at this point in history, when the economic recovery is still so fragile, to get the initiatives in this legislation implemented quickly.

Some misinformation has been given out today regarding the environmental changes that we are proposing. My colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands said “we are torching” the environmental regulations. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Bill C-38 proposes that when major projects are under review there be one project, one review, so that we are not needlessly duplicating and adding time and cost to those who are trying to move on with a project. Environmental assessments will be just as rigorous, perhaps more so. We will be giving companies a timeline in which the answer will be given. The answer may still be no, that the project cannot go ahead because of an environmental concern, but at least at the end of the day the company that is trying to move ahead with a project will have a definitive answer and it can move ahead with certainty.

Over the past number of days and weeks we have debated the changes to the EI system. I sat here through hours of debate as my colleagues on the other side argued against the fact that people should have the opportunity to take a job earning 80% of what they previously earned rather than sitting at home earning 55%.

Many of my constituents find that incongruous. How can those members possibly argue that it would be better for a Canadian to sit at home, not gainfully employed, not feeling productive, not having the honour and the self-esteem of having a productive job, when that individual could earn up to 80% of what he or she previously earned?

Also in the works here are the immigration and refugee changes we are suggesting in terms of getting rid of the hundreds of thousands of backlog cases that we inherited and trying to match the skills of those who plan to immigrate to Canada with job opportunities here. On this point, there is one thing that is being missed by a lot of Canadians.

People criticize us for wanting to keep immigrants out. Nothing could be further from the truth again. I have attended probably 100 citizenship ceremonies in the last six and a half years. Those who are calling for changes to our immigration and refugee system are new immigrants to Canada, who arrived here within the last 10 to 30 years. These people are saying that we need to ensure that we have a fair immigration system, one that gives a clear timeline as to what immigrants can expect in terms of job creation.

Changes to the fisheries and oceans act would also be implemented with the passing of this legislation. I come from an urban-rural riding. Many times farmers in my community have told me how frustrating it is when the Department of Fisheries and Oceans puts undue regulatory roadblocks in the way of their development simply because at one point a particular ditch may have had water in it and there may have been a few tadpoles in it and now they are facing many obstacles in getting on with fully implementing the projects that they want to do.

Under our government's economic action plan, Canada's deficit and taxes are going down. We heard today that Tax Freedom Day is today, June 11. I remember so clearly when I was running for office in 2005-06 that Tax Freedom Day was June 26. Here we are, fully two weeks earlier in reducing the tax burden on Canadians we have been called here to represent.

It is an honour for me to support the government's initiative to extend the sitting hours so that we can actually get the job done. Canadians expect that. They sent us here to do that. If we work together, we can get it done.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It being 5:25 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 27, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

• (1725)

[*English*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, with the agreement of the whips and pursuant to Standing Order 45(7) we ask that the recorded division be deferred to the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** As requested, the vote is deferred.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from dozens of people in the Vancouver area calling on the Government of Canada to withdraw Bill C-31, a bill that punishes legitimate refugees and does nothing to stop human smuggling.

The petitioners point out many troubling aspects of Bill C-31, including: giving the minister the power to hand-pick which countries he thinks are safe without advice; creating two tiers of refugees based on how they arrived in Canada; a five-year mandatory wait for bona fide refugees to become permanent residents and reunite with their families, again based on how they arrive in the country; and treating 16-year-old refugee claimants as adults, including detaining them.

The petitioners call on the government to scrap Bill C-31 and implement Bill C-11, Balanced Refugee Reform Act, legislation that passed just last year with the support of all parties in this House.

With the third reading vote scheduled for tonight, it is the last chance for the Conservative government to do the right thing.

## PENSIONS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I bring forward yet another petition from the residents of Winnipeg North regarding the eligibility for pension age increase from 65 to 67, which is what the Conservative government is proposing to do.

The petitioners believe that people should be able to continue to have the option to retire at the age of 65 and that the government not in any way diminish the importance and value of Canada's three major senior programs: OAS, GIS and CPP.

It is with pleasure that I bring this petition to the government in the expectation that the government will listen to what the residents are saying.

## RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition from a number of constituents in beautiful Langley.

The petitioners state that Canada's 400-year-old definition of a human being is that a child does not become a human being until the moment of complete birth, contrary to 21st century medical evidence. They also state that Parliament has a solemn duty to reject any law that says that some human beings are not human.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the House of Commons to confirm that every human being is recognized by Canadian law as

human by amending section 223 of the Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect 21st century medical evidence.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the Minister of Public Safety stood in the House and said that if people were not for the government's online spying bill, its so-called lawful access legislation, then they were standing with child pornographers.

I have a petition here from the good people in my riding of Davenport, in Toronto, who beg to differ with the minister on his statement and with the government on the online spying bill. They are particularly concerned about measures in the bill that will compel telecommunications companies to hold and store personal data that would be made available to law enforcement agencies without a warrant.

• (1730)

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from people in my riding who are very concerned about cuts to public services in their riding.

Canada Post may or may not close the one big postal station in our riding. My constituents are very concerned. This petition is a testament to that concern.

## CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions. The first is from residents of Quebec.

The petitioners are calling on the government to provide stable, secure and predictable funding for the national public broadcaster.

[*Translation*]

The petitioners have stated that CBC/Radio-Canada has a unique and dramatic role to play.

[*English*]

## BILL C-38

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition, very much on point, is from the residents of Oakville; Windsor; Kitchener-Waterloo; Niagara-on-the-Lake; Vernon; Courtenay and Black Creek, B.C.; and Montreal, all calling on the government to withdraw Bill C-38, the so-called budget implementation bill, and to ensure that those non-budgetary matters receive proper review and are not forced through, as the government appears intent upon doing.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition circulated by the Dogwood initiative in British Columbia and signed by over 57,000 people who do not support the Enbridge project.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to protect British Columbia's waters from an oil disaster by legislating a ban on bulk oil tanker traffic off B.C.'s northern coast.

The petitioners note that the proposed Enbridge project would bring more than 225 supertankers the length of the Eiffel Tower to the pristine coastal waters of northern B.C.

The petitioners also note that even with the most modern technology and oil industry promises, accidents happen with devastating consequences. The vast majority of British Columbians oppose tanker traffic.

## BILL C-38

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second group of petitions calls on the Government of Canada to immediately abandon Bill C-38 and introduce only those measures that are directly related to the budget.

The petitioners note that many of the measures in the bill were not mentioned in the March 29 budget and most of them have nothing to do with implementing the budget.

The petitioners also note that the measures would amend over 60 different laws, including repealing or eliminating the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act, and many others.

The petitioners say that Bill C-38 would undo decades of environmental law and degrade the Canadian government's ability to defend our environment.

## GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by literally hundreds and hundreds of residents in southwestern Ontario concerned with the science and long-term health implications of genetically modified organisms.

The petitioners call on the House to immediately cease the licensing and release of new GMOs and request an independent review of existing GMOs that are presently in the market.

## SRI LANKA

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present hundreds of pages of the petitions on the topic of justice and human rights. We know of the war that took place on the Island of Sri Lanka over the last almost 30 years.

The UN report of the Secretary General's panel of experts on accountability in Sri Lanka found credible allegations of crimes against humanity and war crimes on the island.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to urge the United Nations to immediately establish an independent international and impartial mechanism to ensure truth, accountability and justice in Sri Lanka.

• (1735)

## CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I table a petition today from the residents of Elmwood—

Transcona. The petition is for equity and fairness at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament and the government to ensure that the Holodomor and Canada's first national internment operations are permanently and prominently displayed at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in their own galleries, and that the government suspend any further funding to the museum until issues surrounding the governance of the museum are reviewed and addressed.

[Translation]

## INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

**Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present this petition, signed by some 200 of my constituents, in support of Development and Peace.

The petition primarily calls on the government to fulfill its international responsibilities by once again committing Canada to give 0.7% of its GDP, as recommended, and, in the interests of international solidarity, to fully re-establish the \$49 million in funding requested by Development and Peace for the next five years.

[English]

## PENSIONS

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by residents from Random—Burin—St. George's regarding the government's decision to raise the eligibility age for OAS from 65 to 67. I continue to get petitions on this issue. Thousands of people have sent petitions signing their names. They are calling on the government to reverse its decision, looking at the fact that it would impact those most vulnerable in society, which includes single women and our seniors. Even though it would not impact our seniors today, the fact that it would impact the seniors of tomorrow is still a serious issue and must be addressed. The only way to address this is to have the government reverse its decision to increase the eligibility age for OAS from 65 to 67.

## RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions all similarly worded indicating that Canada's 400-year-old definition of a human being that a child does not become a human being until the moment of complete birth is contrary to 21st century medical evidence. They also state that Parliament has a solemn duty to reject any law that says some human beings are not human.

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

*Routine Proceedings*

These signatures and petitions are from the Grenfell–Broadview area, another similarly worded petition from the Estevan–Lampman area, and another similarly worded petition from Kenosee Lake, Carlyle and area.

## ASSISTED SUICIDE

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a fourth petition from the residents of Canada in support of the Attorney General's strongest possible opposition to the legalization of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide.

[*Translation*]

## PENSIONS

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, I have the honour to present a petition signed by the people of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, who are concerned about the Conservatives' announced changes to old age security. According to experts, this program is viable in the long term.

Since the changes announced to old age security will have a direct, negative impact on the middle class and on seniors most susceptible to living in poverty, the petitioners are calling on the government to not only maintain eligibility for old age security at the age of 65 but to also increase guaranteed income supplement benefits, because they are not enough to help seniors out of poverty. It is a shame that there are Canadians living below the poverty line.

[*English*]

## SRI LANKA

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, present a petition signed by many people around Canada who cite a report of the Secretary-General's panel of experts on accountability in Sri Lanka which found credible allegations that, if proven, indicate that during the final stages of Sri Lanka's war a wide range of serious violations under international humanitarian and human rights law were committed both by the government of Sri Lanka and LTTE, some of which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to urge the United Nations to immediately establish an independent, international and impartial mechanism to ensure truth, accountability and justice in Sri Lanka.

\* \* \*

• (1740)

### QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 621, 622 and 624 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 621—**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:**

With regard to the planned reductions in departmental spending for the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) announced in Budget 2012, for fiscal years 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015: (a) what is the total dollar amount of reductions for each of the program activities, specifically, (i) International Policy Advice and Integration, (ii) Diplomacy and Advocacy, (iii) International Commerce, (iv) Consular Services and Emergency Management, (v) Passport Canada, (vi) Governance, Strategic Direction and Common Service Delivery; (b) what are the total reductions for full-time equivalents (FTEs) for each of the program activities, specifically, (i) International Policy Advice and Integration, (ii) Diplomacy and Advocacy, (iii) International Commerce, (iv) Consular Services and Emergency Management, (v) Passport Canada, (vi) Governance, Strategic Direction and Common Service Delivery; (c) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Corporate Social Responsibility Counsellor for the Extractive Sector; (d) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister, Afghanistan, Middle East and Maghreb, broken down by (i) Afghanistan Inter-Departmental Communications and Information Services Bureau, (ii) Director General, Afghanistan Task Force, (iii) Middle East and Maghreb Bureau; (e) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister, Americas, broken down by (i) Director General, Latin America and Caribbean, (ii) Hemispheric Policy Bureau, (iii) North American Platform Program, Executive Coordinator and Senior Advisor, (iv) North America Policy Bureau, (v) North America Programs and Operations Bureau, (vi) North American Leaders' Summit Division; (f) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister for Europe, Eurasia and Africa, broken down by (i) Africa Bureau, Director General, (ii) Europe, Director General, (iii) North Asia, Europe and Eurasia Bureau, (iv) Office of the Chief Negotiator for the Canada-EU Political Framework Agreement, (v) Senior Advisor, Resource Review, (vi) The New Way Forward Secretariat; (g) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Issues, specifically for the (i) Economic Policy Bureau, broken down by Development Policy and Institutions and International Economic Relations and Summit Division, (ii) Energy, Climate and Circumpolar Affairs Bureau, broken down by Circumpolar Affairs, Climate Change and Energy Division, Secretariat for ABS Negotiations and Sustainable Development Division, (iii) Human Rights and Democracy Bureau, (iv) Human Rights and Freedom Bureau, (v) International Organizations, Human Rights and Democracy Bureau broken down by Democracy and Governance Division, Democracy, Commonwealth and Francophonie Division, Human Rights and Governance Policy Division, Senior Advisor Multilateral Initiatives and Advocacy, and United Nations and Commonwealth Affairs Division;

## Government Orders

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

## POOLED REGISTERED PENSION PLANS ACT

The House resumed from June 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-25, An Act relating to pooled registered pension plans and making related amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that this question be now put.

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the official opposition critic for seniors, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-25 today.

I must begin by mentioning what our dear Prime Minister said a few months ago in Switzerland. During a speech, he said that Canada's aging population is a problem and that if the government does not tackle the problem, it may have even more serious consequences than the recent economic crises.

First, I would like to express the NDP's official position that the aging population is not a problem; it is a situation. And it is not a surprise situation. We have seen it coming for a long time. Today's 60- and 70-year-olds were not born yesterday. Not only is this not a problem, but I think we can view it as an asset. Canada's seniors are a tremendous resource. They have experience and they share their knowledge and experience. These people volunteer in their communities and in politics, and they spend precious time with their families. No matter how numerous our seniors, they are not a problem for our country.

Today, we should not be attacking the aging population, but we should simply know how to adapt. Yes, there are things that need to be done in this regard. As a country, we need to adapt to ensure that everyone can continue to live well and with dignity. We have known about and seen this demographic trend coming for a long time. One way to adapt is to ensure that the seniors of tomorrow will have reliable pension programs and, we hope, financial security that will enable them to live many more years after retirement in dignity and happiness.

Generally speaking, the fact that today we are talking about a bill on one specific pension program is good news because it means that Parliament is addressing the issue and wondering how it can help people retire with dignity.

However, there is something we do not agree on, and that is how to adapt and what tools to give people to ensure that they will be able to have a pleasant retirement.

What do people want exactly? I think that is a basic question that needs to be asked. What is the problem on the ground? What do people expect the government to do to help them?

I travelled all over Quebec. I visited over 30 towns and cities. People went out of their way specifically to address the issue of seniors' financial security. I heard a number of concerns, questions and fears. I would like to share some of them here today.

(h) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister, International Security Branch and Political Director, broken down by, (i) area management office - multilateral group, (ii) International Security Bureau (iii) Senior Coordinator, International Crime and Terrorism; (i) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister, Latin America and Caribbean; (j) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Associate Deputy Minister listed by (i) Office of Protocol, (ii) Programs and Departmental Security, broken down by Global Partnership Program, Program Services Division, Security Abroad Task Force, Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force Secretariat, (iii) Strategic Management and Resource Coordination Bureau; (k) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Communications Bureau; (l) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Communications Consular, Security and Emergency Management Branch, broken down by (i) Area Management Office - Consular, (ii) Consular Operations Bureau, (iii) Consular Policy and Advocacy Bureau, (iv) Emergency Management Bureau, (v) Management and Consular Officer Renewal Team Office, (vi) Security and Intelligence Bureau (vii) Task Force on International Critical Incidents; (m) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the International Platform Branch; (n) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Strategic Policy and Planning; (o) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Summits Management Office; (p) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of Transformation; (q) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Inspector General; (r) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Legal Adviser; (s) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Corporate Secretariat; (t) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Corporate Finance and Operations Office; (u) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs; (v) what is the total dollar amount of reductions to the Office of the Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs); and (w) what is the total dollar amount involved in the asset sales of official residences and land abroad, (i) what is the timeline for the sales, (ii) what is the review process for the sales, (iii) will the sales be disclosed publicly and, if so, where will the information be available, (iv) what departments are involved in the sales?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 622—**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:**

With regard to Canada's examination of its participation in some international organizations, as announced in Budget 2012: (a) what international organizations are part of the examination; (b) what is the timeline for the examination; (c) who will be consulted during the examination; and (d) will the results of the examination be made public?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 624—**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau:**

With regard to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency since 2005-2006, broken down by fiscal year: (a) how many inspections have been conducted in the Canadian food sector; (b) how many inspections in the Canadian food sector have resulted in recalls; (c) how many inspections in the Canadian food sector have resulted in fines; (d) what is the average number of inspections conducted in the Canadian food sector per inspector; and (e) what is the ratio of physical inspections to administrative inspections?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders*

First of all, old age security is an important part of Canada's overall pension system. Old age security is universal. Everyone is entitled to receive it when they turn 65. Everyone counts on it, especially middle-income families and people who live below the poverty line—people who do not make enough money to set some aside in savings plans, people who have had an accident, people who have had to stop working for an extended period of time and perhaps have been unable to return to the labour market, people who were laid off at age 55 or 60 and who have not been able to find another job.

Old age security is an essential part of the system, and because of it, Canada can count itself among those countries that have a smaller percentage of seniors living in poverty. Despite that, there are plans to raise the age of eligibility for the program, which will unfortunately increase poverty among seniors. We have talked a lot about this issue. Given that this is not our primary focus here today, I will move on to some of the other subjects before us.

The Canada pension plan, much like its equivalent in Quebec, is a pension plan that serves all workers. Regardless of the number of hours a person works and no matter what kind of employer he or she works for, everyone who accumulates hours of work contributes to the Canada pension plan or Quebec pension plan. Depending on the number of hours worked and the wages earned, everyone is entitled to receive a certain amount of money. However, this Canada pension plan payment is not enough to replace a person's salary in any meaningful way.

• (1745)

It has to be supplemented by something else. What is more, the Canada pension plan and old age security do not provide Canadians comfortable financial security at retirement either.

Another type of benefit people receive at retirement is an employer provided pension plan. Unfortunately, 12 million Canadians do not have one. Unfortunately, more and more businesses are declaring bankruptcy and are not reimbursing the employees' pension plans, which the employees were counting on for their retirement. Unfortunately, in many cases, these pension plans have been mismanaged by the employers and the benefits have had to be reduced, causing a great deal of discontent.

Something can be done to help Canadians who have employer provided pension plans, but many Canadians do not. What is the government doing for those who do not have an employer provided pension plan?

Another type of savings exists and that is everything to do with RRSPs, group RRSPs, TFSAs, et cetera. Again, many Canadians cannot invest in such plans. People who work full time and earn minimum wage are living below the poverty line. They can hardly put money into an RRSP or a TFSA. I will come back to that later. Here again, more needs to be done to allow Canadians to save for their retirement.

Yes, people have expectations of their government. They have worthwhile suggestions for solving the problems in Canada's pension system. I will come back to this later.

People want a reliable pension system that will provide them with a secure retirement. And I have excellent news: we can create such a

system. We have the tools. We have the resources to provide seniors with greater financial security. All that is needed is a willingness to take this issue seriously and a little political courage. Unfortunately, we see no political courage in Bill C-25. This is not a strong, effective measure that will help Canadians save for their retirement, and that is too bad.

What does Bill C-25 really do for Canadians? That is a good question, because there is not much difference between a pooled registered pension plan and an RRSP, a group RRSP or a TFSA. There is some difference, of course, but it is not big enough to ensure that the 12 million Canadians who have no workplace pension plan will be able to retire worry-free. These measures are not really going to solve the problems I talked about earlier.

At present, 12 million Canadians do not have workplace pension plans and 31% of Canadians eligible to contribute to RRSPs do so. Why do almost 60% of eligible Canadians not contribute to an RRSP? Have the Conservatives asked themselves this question? It is important to know the answer. PRPPs and RRSPs are very similar. We have to wonder why Canadians who can contribute to an RRSP do not currently do so. Perhaps they would not contribute to PRPPs for the same reasons. It is important to ask the question.

Here is another statistic: 41% of Canadians have a TFSA. Why do approximately 60% of Canadians not have one? It is very pertinent to ask this question because, once again, if people have trouble making ends meet, and do not have enough income to live on and to support their children, they probably could not put money into a PRPP any more than they could into a TFSA or an RRSP.

Furthermore, 50% of Canadians who have a TFSA earn \$100,000 or more.

• (1750)

Once again, what are we going to do for these middle- and low-income Canadians who have no retirement security. Is there a better way to help them than setting up a pooled registered pension plan?

Some countries have tried to implement PRPPs but have failed, whereas other countries have been successful. Let me expand on that. For instance, New Zealand and the United Kingdom implemented pooled registered pension plans and they were successful.

That makes you think. What are the differences between the program implemented in those countries and the program that the Conservatives want to implement? The biggest difference is that, in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, employers are required to contribute if the employee does. So it is a very attractive incentive for employees and it increases the amount of money that people can get after they retire. That has encouraged with RRSPs or TFSAs, for example. Neither do we find it in the pooled registered pension plan proposed in Bill C-25.



*Government Orders*

In New Zealand and the United Kingdom, another incentive for people to contribute to pension plans is that the state provides a tax break or pays a bonus to employees who contribute to their pooled registered pension plans.

Countries that have had success with that kind of pension plan have much stronger, much more solid incentives and restrictions. I am not saying that a pooled registered pension plan would be the best solution, but I do want to stress that there are ways to make the tool much more attractive and much more effective.

In a number of cases, we wonder why the government is proposing a solution of this kind. I suggest a comparison with another situation that is being talked about a lot these days, the increase in the age of eligibility for old age security.

Why raise it by two years? A lot of questions remain for which we have no answers. By "we", I do not just mean my colleagues and I, I also mean experts who also have no explanation as to why the government is moving in that direction.

First of all, what were the government's objectives for old age security? The government tells us that the program is not sustainable, but a number of experts say that indeed it is. Can we have the figures and the calculations? What is the objective that the Conservatives are trying to achieve by raising the age of eligibility for old age security. How much money do they feel is needed to make the program sustainable? We do not know.

The other day, an hon. member opposite told me that it is about plain old common sense, of very simple math. I am sorry, but calculations and arguments like that are not very convincing. Can you identify a clear problem and propose clear objectives that would allow us to analyze the various options and act accordingly?

What other options are being studied? There are other options. A bill presents one option to us, but what other options have been looked at? Why this option for the PRPP and not another? Why would another option not work? These are questions that have to be asked but have not been answered. It is difficult to work co-operatively and to propose specific initiatives when we have no idea of the basic objectives. What other options have really been studied? Why was this one chosen rather than another?

Lastly, what will the short-term, medium-term and long-term repercussions be? In other countries, an option like that was studied, put in place and did not work. Why would it be any different in Canada, with Bill C-25? I expect to get some very interesting answers. What can we do to ensure that it will work this time in Canada, when it has not worked in other countries?

• (1755)

It is a well-known fact that the NDP is proposing a solution other than the one proposed in Bill C-25. It proposes doubling the Canada pension plan and Quebec pension plan benefits, rather than create a PRPP, first because of the management costs. How much will the management costs be for a PRPP? Once again, we do not really have an answer. The number is approximate, but it is certainly higher than the costs of managing the Canada pension plan. Then, it is much more egalitarian for certain segments of the population.

One of the examples I like to give is the example of women. The Canada pension plan takes into account the obligation of women to leave the work force if they have a child and the obligation of people to leave the work force if, for example, they have to take care of a family member who is ill. Women are often the ones who do that as well. A pooled registered pension plan does not take those obligations into account. People who have to stop contributing during a specific period will then be penalized through reduced benefits when they retire.

The Canada pension plan is a plan where the risk is assumed by everybody and, because everyone's contributions are grouped together, it makes up for the fact that some people have to take time off for an illness or disability or for family reasons.

Introducing PRPPs instead of improving CPP will lead to an increase in poverty among women. I do not think I need to go on at length about this, but there is much more poverty among senior women than senior men. Something must be done about this. It has to be taken into account. It cannot be ignored. It is a problem the government has to be sensitive to.

Risk sharing is also important. With CPP, everyone shares the risk, but with a PRPP, a single individual assumes the risk. I want to come back to what will happen to someone who lives longer. Since a PRPP is not a defined benefit plan, this person knows how much he is putting into the plan, but not how much he will get out of it. There is certainly a fixed amount. This means that someone who lives a long life will have to figure out how to manage his portfolio so that he has enough money to live on for the rest of his days. What are we saying? Should we hope that this person does not live too long, or else he will pay through the nose and live in poverty? It makes no sense. We can avoid this sort of situation by enhancing CPP.

The same applies to someone who becomes disabled at 58, for example. That person has to stop contributing and will be penalized. The individual has to bear all of the risk, but that risk could be shared by improving the Canada Pension Plan.

I still have so much to say, but I think I will end with some good news.

Canadians want to know that this is not the only way to do things. The Conservatives often argue that if they do not take this step, our economy will crumble and we will end up like this or that other country. That is not true. There are many ways to run a country and many ways to address a problem. There are alternatives to Bill C-25. As I mentioned earlier, the government could double Canada pension plan benefits. We think that can and should be done to ensure financial security for as many seniors as possible.

The government could also increase the guaranteed income supplement. I have talked at length about poverty among seniors. Currently, the government does not provide seniors with enough money to get them out of poverty. Seniors have to choose between buying food and buying medication. That is unacceptable in our society. The government should increase the guaranteed income supplement to ensure a certain level of dignity for our seniors.

*Government Orders*

There are still more things the government could do: leaving the old age security age at 65 is an obvious one for the NDP. Protecting employer-managed pensions and amending Canada's Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act are other options. There are many good things the government could do to ensure financial security for retired Canadians.

• (1800)

[*English*]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's remarks, but there was one comment right near the end that I really take exception to. She was commenting about the amounts given by government not being adequate. Well, the amounts given by government are actually the money that is earned by Canadians, so we simply cannot continue to spend other people's money. That is the NDP proposal.

I would like to ask my colleague why she would be opposed to extending the right to a workplace pension to Canadians who do not have that option now. Over 60% of Canadians currently do not have access to a workplace pension.

There are all kinds of small and medium-sized enterprises. We know that the small and medium-sized businesses in the country are the economic engine that keeps our country going, so why would she deny them that possibility? The small engine repair shop, a dental office or a hair salon are all examples of these kinds of business that up until now could not afford to go out and buy a pension plan, but if they pool their resources with others in similar professions, they could actually get a low-cost, effective pension plan. Why would she deny that to the 60% of Canadians who do not have access to it?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his very pertinent and intelligent question.

It is true that I am prepared to say that the pooled registered pension plan is not a problem in itself. I agree with it, but it is not the best solution. A number of Canadians are not able to put money aside in RRSPs. Will PRPPs really help those Canadians? Some, maybe, but certainly not all. We can do better, as I have been saying since this debate began.

Why not enhance Canada Pension Plan benefits? The program works well; it has very low management costs and the ability to handle risks collectively.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, prime ministers like Mackenzie King and Lester Pearson saw the value of retirement and the importance of providing a pension income for our seniors. Today we look at the foundation programs that were put into place by Liberal administrations in the past, such as the CPP, OAS and GIS. These programs have provided for seniors over generations now, and we believe in those programs.

In regard to this specific bill, there are provincial jurisdictions, we are told by the federal government, that support the need for having this bill passed so that this new pension option would be there for those few Canadians, and ultimately it could be quite a few. In particular, the Province of Quebec and the Province of Manitoba,

where there is an NDP administration, seem to be supportive of having this pooled pension plan.

We in the Liberal Party see it as a small tool. It needs to be changed and it could be far more effective, but there does seem to be a desire to have it. Why would the NDP oppose it as at least a pension option? That seems to be all it really is. It is a very small one.

We too want to see the increases to programs like CPP, but this does seem to be a consumer-friendly option for individuals who might have additional pension money going forward. I do not quite understand why the NDP would oppose it as an option.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** But, Mr. Speaker, we also have to emphasize the fact that a lot of people are not in favour of creating savings schemes of this kind, but instead are in favour of enhancing the Canada Pension Plan, or its Quebec equivalent, the Régime des rentes du Québec.

I would like to quote from a recent study done by the Régime des rentes du Québec, which states:

...this quick analysis shows that there may be a significant gap in the standard of living at retirement between those with fixed benefit pension plans and those who must rely only on RRSPs, RRIFs, LIRAs and LIFs.

We can add PRPPs to that list.

There is a better way to provide for people's financial security and quality of life than by creating a program like this. It is time to take decisive action, with political courage and with specific initiatives.

[*English*]

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent intervention on this topic.

Recently at the World Economic Forum, our Prime Minister announced that there would be major transformations coming to Canada's retirement pension system.

The only transformative change that Canada really needs for retirement security is investment in our Canada pension plan and Quebec pension plan, yet the government once again is proposing another privately administered voluntary savings plan. However, statistics have shown and even members across the aisle have said that people are not participating in it, and that makes it difficult.

My colleague here has many suggestions. I wonder if she could elaborate very briefly on some suggestions that would be equitable, to lift every senior in Canada out of poverty rather than just the wealthy ones.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

First, I spoke a lot about old age security, an essential part of the social security net. Increasing the age of eligibility for this program would have a direct negative impact on people in the middle class and people living close to the poverty line.

*Government Orders*

There are other things that Canadians want to see us do about their retirement security. They are investing in RRSPs, but right now they are now seeing their RRSPs decrease because RRSPs depend on the stock market. That is not retirement security.

Canadians want a defined benefit pension plan. This means that they would be able to count on a set amount of money. Regardless of the amount, they must be able to count on a set amount.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, building on the previous several questions, it is clear to everybody on this side of the House and I think we all agree that what we need is a real CPP, expanded, enhanced and made functional.

Having said that, I am getting a lot of correspondence from small business people in my riding saying this is not great, but at least it would be something for small businesses and for people who do not currently have another vehicle.

My question to the hon. member is simple. Despite all the things we would like to see, which would be much better, does she think there is some potential for this to meet the needs of some people, and would there be any real harm in it if we were to go with the flow?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond by talking about another very similar tactic, which we have seen in other cases.

Recently, the Conservative government announced that it was working very hard on combatting elder abuse because it had amended a small part of the law that makes it possible to ensure that elder abuse would be subject to a harsher penalty. That is the type of smoke and mirror show that the Conservatives like to put on. They brag about taking action for a cause, when really all they are doing is amending a small part of the law, and they could have done so much more.

Why not combat the real causes of elder abuse? Why not combat poverty among seniors? Why not ensure that they have access to affordable and adapted housing? Why not take strong measures to truly address the issues, rather than making big promises but very few changes?

• (1810)

[*English*]

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand to talk about the pooled registered pension plan bill that is here before us.

I am going to talk a bit about some of my experiences as a small-business person and how this would help the employers, the employees and the entrepreneurial sector of our economy. The small businesses, as was said earlier, are the driving forces in our economy. We sometimes forget how important that sector is and how hard it is for them to save for retirement.

I am also going to talk a bit about what a pooled registered pension plan is, so that we can better understand what it is, how it works and what it would do.

If I have time, I am going to talk about the organizations and people out there who have talked positively about pooled registered pension plans, and I will try to convince some of my colleagues on the other side that this would be a great tool to put in the toolbox of pension saving.

First, let me talk about small businesses. Let me talk about small-business owners. In my past, I have certainly been a small businessman. I have been a mentor to other small-business people. Far too often the entrepreneurs in this country worry a lot about one thing in their business. That is the customer, the person who they are selling their product or their service to; that is their whole outreach. Small-business people and entrepreneurs are singularly focused to do what they do and do it right.

It is not that they, in any way, dislike their employees or do not want to do best by them, but something like putting together a pension plan for the employees would come under some of the other things that small business owners and entrepreneurs have to do. It is about their economy. It is about growing their business and serving their customers right.

Entrepreneurs, by their true nature, are usually very good at one thing, whatever it is. I rather like the food business and the customer service side of the food business. I was very focused and I knew I was very good at that. Others may be very good as insurance brokers, as mentioned earlier, as dentists or whatever. Whatever small-business owners are engaged in, they are usually absolute experts at the one thing they do.

But guess what? Small-business owners are the only people who get to make the decisions. They get to be the purchasing director, the person who ensures all the supplies show up and at the right price. They are also in charge of marketing, even though their business may not be about marketing. They are in charge of making sure customers come and are happy.

Most of the day, they spend their time being a coach, a trainer, helping their employees do the job right to serve their people properly. They are also financial planners because their bank will want to know what it is they are looking for. Sometimes they are nothing more than cleaners. If there is a spill, as owners, they are the ones who clean it up. That is what small-business people do: customer service, customer complaints. They are in charge of productivity. In a big business, there may be a whole department, but here in small-business and entrepreneurship, it is the owners. The owners of a small business are responsible for ensuring that happens. They are the accounts payable manager. They are the accounts receivable manager. They are all these things. As small-business people, they may be expert at one thing, but they are responsible for being good at all those things.

*Government Orders*

Let us add to it, then, pension planning. It just is not in their portfolio, in most cases. The pooled registered pension plan would give them the ability to allow that to go somewhere else. It would be administered by pooling together a business' employees with other businesses' employees, those of other small-business people and other entrepreneurs who might otherwise never plan a pension plan. The money would go into a great big pool and would be administered by someone else. A small-business owner would think, "Is that ever good. Somebody is going to do part of my list. I'm going to be able to hand this off to someone else".

Let us talk a bit about what the pooled registered pension plan would do. It would do exactly what it says. It would allow businesses, certainly small businesses, entrepreneurs, single-owner businesses and single-operated businesses, to pool together.

●(1815)

I cannot tell members how many times during RRSP season I drive by a bank with a sign that says to buy RRSPs by such and such a date. As a small-business owner I may have even been on my way to that bank to make a deposit. However, I would get to that the next day. Procrastination on the areas where we are not really experts, as entrepreneurs, get left until the next day.

One of the previous speakers asked, if this is so great, why is there not more uptake on RRSPs and why is there not more uptake on TFSAs, the tax-free savings accounts. The reason is that they both require a small-business owner to go someplace and do something. This requires employees to automatically become registered as part of a pooled pension, and it works. It will automatically happen.

As a small-business owner, I always thought my small business was my retirement. That was part of the financial planning. At the end of the day, I hoped it was worth enough and I could sell it, and that was how I would retire. I think most entrepreneurs out there with a small number of employees, or no employees at all, think that is what their retirement is. Their saving for retirement is working hard every day, hoping their business is successful.

What the pooled registered pension plan does is make it also available for them to pool together with other small businesses and save for their retirement in a different way besides simply being the cleaner, the dentist, the hairdresser or whatever the business is. It just is out there. It is a tool in their toolbox. It makes it easy. If we can make it easy, people will do it. It makes it easy for them to pool together to get their employees to automatically register, and then there are pensions out there.

I heard one of the previous speakers talk about some 60% of people in Canada not having a pension plan. That is absolutely right. It is terrible. Here is a chance for more people, whatever their rate of pay, to pool together their assets in those pooled pension plans and allow that to pay for itself and provide a pension plan for them.

In order to increase or do anything with the Canada pension plan, it takes the provincial ministers of finance and the federal Minister of Finance to agree to do it. I am sorry, but we are not at that point. We have not yet been able to get the required number of provinces to do that. That is not on the table, but this is, and when it was launched it had unanimous consent of the ministers of finance in the provincial and federal governments to move forward to do this. It can be done.

Let me switch to some of the great comments that have been made about pooled registered pension plans on behalf of small business. I recognize that I am concentrating there because of being a former small-business owner. The new voluntary low-cost and administratively simple retirement savings mechanism would allow more employers and employees and those who are self-employed to participate in a pension plan. Who would not wish for that to happen?

Dan Kelly, from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business agrees and wants it to happen.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce stated that this legislation:

...introduced...has the potential to benefit the estimated 60 per cent of Canadians who have either no, or insufficient, retirement savings.

That is the group we are trying to address here, those who are not part of a large industry and have a pension plan to go with it. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce believes PRPPs, pooled registered pension plans, would give many businesses the flexibility and tools they need to help their employees save for retirement, who might otherwise not do it because they missed the great big reader board at the front of the bank saying that RRSP time was here and it was time to put some money in there.

Here is one of my favourites. Minister Duncan from Ontario said that the McGuinty government supports the federal Conservatives' PRPP proposal but believes it is only one tool in helping Canadians save more.

I agree. It is only one tool. We will still have the Canada pension plan, the OAS and the rest of the things, but there is just one that would have given me a chance to save for retirement as a small-business owner, a person who got up every morning and went and worked for myself most of my life.

This is important to us. Let us get this done.

●(1820)

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder what the size of that tool is or how big a tool it is in that toolbox that the minister across the way spoke of. There are micro screwdrivers and maybe this pooled pension Ponzi scheme that he is talking about is a micro screwdriver. I can tell the member opposite that there are a lot of small businesses in a riding like mine in a big urban centre. Not one of them would be able to access this plan or use it to build a retirement plan.

Will the member opposite agree with me that, if this is a tool, it is a darned small one at that?

**Mr. Joe Preston:** Mr. Speaker, I am not here to discuss what size of tool he is. I am here to discuss this bill. Business people who have not had the opportunity to save for retirement, this gives them that opportunity. This plan is available to millions of Canadians who otherwise do not have it available to them.

*Government Orders*

What will the uptake be? If everybody over there would vote for this and get it out there, we will see what the uptake on it will be.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think a number of stakeholders will be watching once this legislation ultimately passes and we will see what sort of an uptake there is. We have expressed concerns in terms of what we believe would have made it a better bill. Unfortunately, the government did not see the merit in dealing with issues such as management fees and so forth.

Having said that, my question is more related to what I believe most Canadians are concerned about with regard to the current pension programs, the big three being the CPP, OAS and GIS. Could the member provide some comment as to how active he believes the government is on dealing with that file? I understand that it did get consensus from all the provinces on this bill, but the government has failed to get consensus on the big three pension issues with the provinces. Why?

**Mr. Joe Preston:** Mr. Speaker, I know it is not for lack of trying on the part of the Minister of State for Finance. He went coast to coast talking to all stakeholders about pensions. Many of our own members did the same thing in prebudget consultations. We have been doing this consultation. Other than the quote I read from Minister Duncan in Ontario, I cannot speak on behalf of the ministers of the provinces as to why they thought this.

He asked what the uptake would be. I will tell him what small businesses say. They are not paying into CPP, so at the end of their working lives, they do not have it. It is not there for them because small business people invest their money back into their business. I suggest this is an opportunity for them to pool their resources with other small businesses and have great pensions at the end of the day.

**Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I come from a background of employee benefits and pensions and throughout that time I noticed that there has been a dramatic shift as it relates to pensions, RRSPs and, frankly, there has not been the uptake. As I have gone through my riding and asked questions about the interest in it, there seems to be a lot of interest in uptake.

I struggle because I am not sure why there is such opposition to this from members opposite, but I would ask my colleague from Elgin—Middlesex—London this question. Does he think, given a chance, that small businesses like the kinds of companies he represented in his pre-political life, would take a hard look at and participate in this program?

• (1825)

**Mr. Joe Preston:** Mr. Speaker, I said in answer to a question from a previous speaker exactly that. I spent my time this weekend wandering through my riding, going to different events, and that is what I being asked. When I told people I was going to be speaking on pooled pensions in the House, people asked me if we had not already passed it, that they were waiting for it to happen.

I thank the member for London West because his previous background was in the type of business that may be the types of groups of people that would administer this, other small businesses helping with pooled pensions so that small business people and entrepreneurs can save for retirement without really having to leave their businesses and be there to serve their customers.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before I call on the hon. member for Chambly—Borduas, I must inform him that I will have to interrupt him at 6:30 p.m., at the conclusion of today's government business.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for your kind warning.

My speech will be very similar to that of the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard. The simple reason is that the public consultations that she carried out in Quebec with the hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin were also held in my riding. Many of the comments that she heard about the problems facing our seniors or those retiring soon are the same comments that I have heard. And when we think about it, this affects everyone.

I would like to use the short time that I have to talk about that and to explain why we think the measures proposed in Bill C-25 are not appropriate.

That is basically it. We are not saying that this bill is a travesty. We simply want to provide people who are going to retire or who already have retired with better tools.

What this bill is proposing is very similar to what we already have, such as RRSPs. What is more, we have been given very little information. We do not know the administrative costs associated with this plan. The employer is not required to contribute to the plan, something that is done in many other countries. The pension plans of the largest corporations require the employer to make a certain contribution. There are many problems with all this.

The NDP believes that these measures are not appropriate at this time, especially when the eligibility age for old age security is being increased from 65 to 67.

We saw with RRSPs what can happen when people are asked to invest their pensions in the stock market. That is what happened in 2008.

Many Canadians were rather fortunate compared to Americans. Nonetheless, people have been seriously affected. At the very least, we cannot downplay the importance of all this. People invested in RRSPs for 10 years and saw their investments dwindle. When it comes to retirement security, that is not the norm in a country such as ours. Members will recall the case of Nortel, where there were no provisions in place to guarantee people's pensions.

In the last minute I have left, I would like to say that in talking to people, their main complaint was that they were tired of investing in the market and not having retirement security. They said that they want to have the support of a system in which they can invest, such as old age security and the guaranteed income supplement.

*Government Orders*

The guaranteed income supplement is a very important tool. We in the NDP would like to increase the GIS. With a very small investment, we could lift most seniors living below the poverty line above that line and enable them to live in dignity. That is what the people in my riding and many other ridings told us.

We oppose this bill because it is not the right tool in the current economic situation. There are much better tools. That is what the NDP would do if it formed the government.

• (1830)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Chambly—Borduas will have six minutes to finish his speech and another five minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on the motion.

\* \* \*

**PROTECTING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM ACT**

The House resumed from June 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act, the Marine Transportation Security Act and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the motion for the third reading of Bill C-31.

Call in the members.

• (1900)

[English]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 276)

**YEAS**

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Aubin	Ayala
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brisson
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dusseault
Easter	Foote
Fortin	Freeman
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Groguhé

Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jacob	Julian
Karygiannis	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Masse	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)
Mourani	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rae	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau
Turmel	Valeriote— 130

**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)	Brunoogoe
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)
Flaherty	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes	Hiebert
Hilley	Hoback
Hoepfner	Holder
James	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenny (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung

*Government Orders*

Lizon  
Lukiwski  
MacKay (Central Nova)  
Mayes  
McLeod  
Menzies  
Miller  
Moore (Fundy Royal)  
Norlock  
O'Neill Gordon  
Oda  
Opitz  
Payne  
Poilievre  
Raitt  
Rathgeber  
Rempel  
Rickford  
Saxton  
Seeback  
Shipley  
Sopuck  
Stanton  
Strahl  
Tilson  
Toews  
Trottier  
Tweed  
Valcourt  
Van Loan  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)  
Weston (Saint John)  
Wilks  
Wong  
Young (Oakville)  
Zimmer — 159

Lobb  
Lunney  
MacKenzie  
McColeman  
Menegakis  
Merrifield  
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
Nicholson  
O'Connor  
Obhrai  
Oliver  
Paradis  
Penashue  
Preston  
Rajotte  
Reid  
Richards  
Ritz  
Schellenberger  
Shea  
Smith  
Sorenson  
Storseth  
Sweet  
Toet  
Trost  
Truppe  
Uppal  
Van Kesteren  
Vellacott  
Warawa  
Watson  
Williamson  
Yelich  
Young (Vancouver South)

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)  
Flaherty  
Galipeau  
Gill  
Goguen  
Goodyear  
Grewal  
Hayes  
Hillyer  
Hoepfner  
James  
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Kerr  
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
Lauzon  
Leaf  
Lemieux  
Lizon  
Lukiwski  
MacKay (Central Nova)  
Mayes  
McLeod  
Menzies  
Miller  
Moore (Fundy Royal)  
Norlock  
O'Neill Gordon  
Oda  
Opitz  
Payne  
Poilievre  
Raitt  
Rathgeber  
Rempel  
Rickford  
Saxton  
Seeback  
Shipley  
Sopuck  
Stanton  
Strahl  
Tilson  
Toews  
Trottier  
Tweed  
Valcourt  
Van Loan  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)  
Weston (Saint John)  
Wilks  
Wong  
Young (Oakville)  
Zimmer — 159

Armstrong  
Aspin  
Bateman  
Bernier  
Blaney  
Boughen  
Breitkreuz  
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
Bruinooge  
Calandra  
Cannan  
Carrie  
Chong  
Clement  
Davidson  
Del Mastro  
Dreesen  
Dykstra  
Fast  
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
Fletcher  
Gallant  
Glover  
Goldring  
Gourde  
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)  
Hiebert  
Hoback  
Holder  
Jean  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Kent  
Komarnicki  
Lake  
Lebel  
Leitch  
Leung  
Lobb  
Lunney  
MacKenzie  
McColeman  
Menegakis  
Merrifield  
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
Nicholson  
O'Connor  
Obhrai  
Oliver  
Paradis  
Penashue  
Preston  
Rajotte  
Reid  
Richards  
Ritz  
Schellenberger  
Shea  
Smith  
Sorenson  
Storseth  
Sweet  
Toet  
Trost  
Truppe  
Uppal  
Van Kesteren  
Vellacott  
Warawa  
Watson  
Williamson  
Yelich  
Young (Vancouver South)

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment defeated

**The Speaker:** The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say ye.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

● (1905)

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

(Division No. 277)

## YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders

## NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Aubin	Ayala
Bellavance	Bennett

*Government Orders*

Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brison
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeman	Garneau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Masse
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)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	St-Denis
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Stoffer
Sitsabaiesan	Toone
Stewart	Trudeau
Thibeault	Valeriote — 132
Tremblay	
Turmel	

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.  
(Bill read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

## EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion by the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. The question is on the amendment.

● (1915)

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

*(Division No. 278)*

## YEAS

## Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Aubin
Ayala	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brosseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dusseau	Freeman
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Grogulé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia	Hughes
Jacob	Julian
Kellway	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
Mai	Marston
Masse	Mathysen
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Quach	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Savoie
Scott	Sellah
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Stewart	Stoffer
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Turmel — 96

## NAYS

## Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Bellavance
Bennett	Benoit
Bemier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Brunoogoe
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan



## Government Orders

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment defeated.

[Translation]

The next question is on the main motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.**Some hon. members:** Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinion, the yeas have it.*And five or more members having risen:*

● (1925)

[English]

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

(Division No. 279)

## YEAS

## Members

Carmichael	Carrie
Casey	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coderre
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dion	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Foote
Fortin	Galipeau
Gallant	Garneau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Hsu
Hyer	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	May
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Mourain	Murray
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Obhrai	Oda
Oliver	Opitz
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Plamondon
Poillievre	Preston
Rae	Raith
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger	Seeback
Sgro	Shea
Shipley	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	St-Denis
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Trost
Trottier	Trudeau
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Valerjote	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
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Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Bellavance
Bennett	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Casey	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coderre
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dion	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Foote
Fortin	Galipeau
Gallant	Garneau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hayes

*Government Orders*

Hiebert	Hillyer	Dusseau	Freeman
Hoback	Hoepfner	Garrison	Genest
Holder	Hsu	Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Hyer	James	Godin	Grogulé
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Hassainia	Hughes
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent	Jacob	Julian
Kerr	Komarnicki	Kellway	Lapointe
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake	Larose	Latendresse
Lamoureux	Lauzon	Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	Leslie	Liu
Leef	Leitch	Mai	Marston
Lemieux	Leung	Masse	Mathysen
Lizon	Lobb	Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Lukiwski	Lunney	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
MacKenzie	May	Mulcair	Nantel
Mayes	McCallum	Nash	Nicholls
McColeman	McGuinty	Nunez-Melo	Papillon
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod	Patry	Péclét
Menegakis	Menzies	Perreault	Pilon
Merrifield	Miller	Quach	Rafferty
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)		Ravignat	Raynault
Moore (Fundy Royal)		Rousseau	Sagamash
Mourani	Murray	Sandhu	Savoie
Nicholson	Norlock	Scott	Sellah
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Obhrai	Oda	Stewart	Stoffer
Oliver	Opitz	Thibeault	Toone
Paradis	Payne	Tremblay	Turmel — 96
Penashue	Plamondon		
Poillievre	Preston		
Rae	Raitt		
Rajotte	Rathgeber		
Regan	Reid		
Rempel	Richards		
Rickford	Ritz		
Saxton	Scarpaleggia		
Schellenberger	Seeback		
Sgro	Shea		
Shipley	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)		
Smith	Sopuck		
Sorenson	St-Denis		
Stanton	Storseth		
Strahl	Sweet		
Tilson	Toet		
Toews	Trost		
Trottier	Trudeau		
Truppe	Tweed		
Uppal	Valcourt		
Valeriotte	Van Kesteren		
Van Loan	Vellacott		
Wallace	Warawa		
Warkentin	Watson		
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)			
Weston (Saint John)			
Wilks	Williamson		
Wong	Yelich		
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)		
Zimmer — 195			

PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, during the vote it was noted that the member for York West was taking some photographs of members on this side of the House. I would ask that she confirm that she has deleted those photos.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, I did not actually. It was deleted the minute I took it, because it is against the law and against parliamentary privilege to take pictures in the House.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, on another point, during the vote the Minister of Justice was talking on his phone.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** That is a different point of order.

I recognize the hon. member for York West's response, and that will take care of the matter.

We are going to be resuming debate here momentarily. I would ask that all hon. members who wish to carry on make their way to their respective lobbies, and we will get under way.

\* \* \*

### CANADA-JORDAN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT

The House resumed from June 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-23, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Agreement on the Environment between Canada and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Agreement on Labour Cooperation between Canada and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that this question be now put.

### NAYS

#### Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Aubin
Ayala	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brosseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé

*Government Orders*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Resuming debate. Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.  
(Motion agreed to)

• (1930)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

*[For continuation of proceedings, see part B]*

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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, June 11, 2012**  
**(Part B)**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 11, 2012

[Continuation of proceedings from part A ]

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### JOBS, GROWTH AND LONG-TERM PROSPERITY ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, as reported (without amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** When we last took up debate on this question, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques had five minutes left in his speech and five minutes for questions.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before the break, I was talking about the fact that we saw the bill introduced and the Conservative government's budget as an austerity budget that will have recessionary consequences.

The issue of employment insurance, in particular, is close to my heart. I can demonstrate the impact that this bill's provisions will have on employment insurance with a statement made by the member for Madawaska—Restigouche on the airwaves of a radio station in my riding of Rimouski. He was asked something very simple: if an employee who loses his job accepts a new job at 70% of his salary, for fear of losing his benefits, as stipulated, and he then loses this new job, must he accept a second new job at 70% of the 70% of his initial salary? The member for Madawaska—Restigouche clearly stated that that was the case, according to the logic of the bill, and that that was why we have regulations on minimum wage.

It seems clear from over here that this budget is an austerity and recessionary budget that will push down wages. The middle class and people with fewer resources will pay the price.

I would like to talk briefly about another provision in the bill, namely, division 36 of part 4, which amends the Bank Act. I can assure this House that this will cause serious problems. I feel as though we are in the movie *Groundhog Day*. We know how some of the provinces, including Quebec, responded to the regulation of financial markets. The matter went all the way to Supreme Court, which recognized the supremacy of provincial jurisdictions in this area. Now the federal government is trying to give itself exclusive

jurisdiction over financial institutions, particularly when it comes to consumer protection.

To date, this has been a shared jurisdiction. Of course the Bank Act falls under federal jurisdiction, but consumer protection still falls under provincial jurisdiction, and both levels of government have been acting in co-operation with one another. The federal government made a unilateral decision, without consulting anyone—as was the case with most aspects of this bill—to rewrite a provision and include it somewhere, on page 386, I think, of a 430-page bill. Ultimately, this will cause serious problems because I am convinced that Quebec and perhaps some of the other provinces will want to fight this in court. The very least a responsible federal government could do is consult with its provincial partners, but this one did not.

The Conservatives have a lot to say about how much time has been spent on this debate. The government says that more time has been spent debating this bill than any other budget implementation bill in the past. That is hogwash for a number of reasons.

Seventy laws—69 to be more precise—are being created, abolished or amended. In committee, we generally devote two to three committee meetings to one bill. This bill affects 70 laws. That would represent a total of 140 to 210 hours of consideration in total for all the provisions of this bill. I can say that in committee, we devoted 90 minutes to two hours maximum to the major reform to employment insurance. We spent a maximum of two hours considering an equally big reform to old age security. There was also not enough time to give proper attention to other topics, including the legislation on employment equity, which makes federal contractors no longer subject to employment equity rules.

The bill is extremely problematic for all those reasons. We have said it before and we will say it again: this is extremely anti-democratic. We regret that we still have to be here debating this entire bill, which should have been split up a long time ago.

• (1935)

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his very enlightening speech, which shows the extent to which the government is clearly in error as it manages this country.

*Government Orders*

The hon. member has pointed out a number of problems associated with the consequences of Bill C-38 that will affect provincial jurisdiction. During the debates on Bill C-25, dealing with pooled registered pension plans, one of the hon. members opposite brought up the fact that it is practically impossible to work with the provinces to find common ground using the Canada pension plan, for example.

This is really incredible because, if you go back a number of years, you will see that the Canada Health Act was a work in progress extending over a number of years that allowed for agreement and co-operation between the federal and provincial governments.

I would like the hon. member to enlighten me on this government's almost pathological inability to negotiate and come to agreements with the provinces. Bill C-38 is an example of that.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member brings up an excellent point. It is something we have seen over and over again. Among other things, we have seen it on the subject of the Bank Act, which I mentioned, and on the subject of pensions, which he brought up as well.

The most telling example is employment insurance. Only last week, we saw four provincial premiers, some of whom were Conservatives, take a stand against the fact that the government is going to press ahead with a major reform that is going to affect the regional economy. In Atlantic Canada, as in Quebec, people depend in part on seasonal work. So there will be consequences. Doing this without the slightest consultation is no way to run a federation. The Conservative government has no idea what the word "consultation" means. It tries to pass bills and put measures in place as quickly as it can, and the provinces are often left to pick up the pieces.

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member to address another problem with Bill C-38.

It is no secret that one of the very serious problems with this bill is all the economic consequences associated with it. They are almost incalculable, but we are going to identify them nonetheless. The government has, in fact, determined what direct cuts would be made to the public service. The Parliamentary Budget Officer managed to identify broader consequences and, above all, has said, since the start of the cuts, that it was going very far. Can the hon. member expand on those consequences?

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer was clear about the jobs.

Using the same model that the government and the Department of Finance used, he estimated that the consequences of the austerity budget tabled by the Conservatives would be the loss of about 40,000 jobs in the public and private sectors over the next two years. At the end of four years, in 2015 or 2016, some 100,000 public and private sector jobs would be affected. Why? Because of this austerity budget, the Canadian economy will not be able to achieve its potential or maximum potential. In that respect, a lot of people will unfortunately be affected by losing their jobs or being unable to find employment because it will no longer exist at that point.

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to quote the hon. minister of state and hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche, who said:

We need to make sure that employment insurance is not a cushion for people to sit on for months, all year round, year after year... Those people, though they are not many, would often rather take their pink slip and go hunting than go to work.

Those remarks obviously show an incredible lack of respect. Could the hon. member tell me what he thinks?

● (1940)

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I have already quoted the hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche on something else that was problematic. I am not necessarily surprised because this government really seems to think that seasonal workers, regardless of their qualifications, training and efforts, are just lazy and choose to work only a few months to be able to have the rest of the time off. We do not share that attitude on this side. It is unfortunate, but I think that this is very telling of the spirit of the bill we have before us.

[English]

BILL C-38—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the global recovery remains fragile, especially in Europe, Canadians want their government to focus on what matters: job creation, economic growth and long-term prosperity. We are actually doing that through this bill and economic action plan 2012.

We actually welcome debate on this, although I must note that the opposition parties just voted against lengthening debate here in the House. It seems that they only want to stall and delay the process by forcing hundreds of votes on a bill that they opposed before it was even introduced.

With that in mind, I must advise you, Mr. Speaker, that agreement has not been reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) concerning the proceedings at report stage and third reading of Bill C-38, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at those stages.

REPORT STAGE

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am here today to discuss Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, and to stand against the NDP and the opposition attempts to delay and defeat it.

As we watch the global economy continue to struggle, most notably in Europe, this legislation would help our country stay the course and ensure that our economy remains sound and strong. Unfortunately, the opposition parties seem more intent on getting attention in the newspapers with their procedural partisan games.

In the words of a recent *Toronto Sun* editorial:

As Europe stands poised on the brink of a disastrous economic wildfire that could blacken the world, the NDP leader[s] hypocrisy and self-obsession is in full flame.

*Government Orders*

It goes on to say, “vowing to delay the passing of” economic action plan 2012, “playing silly buggers with amendments and procedure.... This is nothing but grandstanding. Right now—”

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I just heard a couple of terms in the member's speech that I would caution him to watch. He might be quoting from a news article, but I would remind him that he is not allowed to do indirectly what he is not allowed to do directly. If he is going to finish with the citation, he might want to be careful with the words, because I do not think they are helpful to the debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, I was simply quoting from a *Toronto Sun* editorial, and the purpose of that was to show that it is recognized outside of the House as well that the NDP is simply using delay tactics in order to stop our budget bill from getting through. I could not have said it better.

The NDP and its opposition cohorts are delaying when they should be helping us pass this essential bill so we can ensure that Canada keeps its enviable economic status on the world stage. Canadians elected us to carry out a mandate. That mandate was clear: create jobs, keep taxes low and keep the economy strong. Bill C-38 delivers on that mandate and goes a long way for Canadians. It supports jobs and growth, would create value-added jobs through innovation, would ensure the responsible development of our resources and, most important, it treats taxpayer dollars responsibly because this government is committed to managing the tax dollars of Canadians as if we had earned them ourselves.

Further, we made a commitment to the Canadian people to return to balanced budgets over the medium term. Over the past year, our government conducted a comprehensive review of approximately \$75 billion of direct program spending by federal departments and agencies and we identified a number of opportunities to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations, programs and services that will result in cost savings for the Canadian taxpayer.

Canadians know the importance of living within their means and expect their government to do the same. That is why we are committed to managing public finances in a sustainable and responsible manner. Specifically, our government is committed to reducing unnecessary spending by focusing on providing programs that are consistent with federal roles and responsibilities. It is our duty to ensure programs are delivered by those best positioned to do so and to refocus program funding based on achievable objectives and the needs of Canadians.

For example, through economic action plan 2012, we are eliminating the penny. The penny was for many years a positive source of revenue for the Royal Canadian Mint and the Canadian government when its 1¢ face value exceeded the cost of producing and distributing the penny. However, over time, inflation eroded the purchasing power of the penny and multiplied its manufacturing costs. It now costs taxpayers 1.5¢ for every penny made. It is the right time to eliminate it. It is underused by Canadians, no longer vital to commerce and, ultimately, a burden on Canada's balance sheet. The estimated savings from eliminating the penny will be about \$11 million a year, helping us to meet our reduction targets and save Canadians money. In the words of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business:

It has been a long time coming. It's been a real pain more than anything else. We've actually polled our members on this and they're supportive.

Another example of how we are managing taxpayer dollars responsibly is our recent treatment of the Governor General's salary. Following consultations between the Governor General and the government, both have agreed that the income tax exemption for the Governor General's salary should end and that it should be subject to tax in the same manner as the salary of all other Canadians. This tax treatment is consistent with recent measures in other Commonwealth countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, to make the salaries of their governors general subject to income tax as well.

In the words of noted *Winnipeg Sun* columnist Tom Brodbeck:

Governors general of Canada will no longer enjoy tax-free status on a portion of their salaries: The Queen's representatives will have to pay taxes just like the rest of us. I didn't even know they had tax-free status. Good.

Other common sense measures we are undertaking in economic action plan 2012 to reduce costs for taxpayers includes selling some costly official residences abroad and having our diplomats move to more cost-effective ones. This will generate capital revenue of over \$80 million. More modest, cost-effective quarters will not impact the ability of our diplomats to do their jobs and it will reduce the number of required staff, resulting in further operating savings.

Finally, another example of refocusing program spending on the needs of Canadians is our government's decision to eliminate the Katimavik program. Make no mistake, our government is committed to our young people and the opportunities they deserve and we will achieve that by funding programs that benefit large numbers of young people at a reasonable cost rather than concentrating available funding on a very small number of participants at an excessive per person cost, such as this program.

● (1945)

Our government is proud to continue to invest in affordable, effective programming that engages youth, including Encounters with Canada, Forum for Young Canadians and organizations that support youth, like the YMCA. Canadian Heritage will continue to invest over \$105 million in youth programming to allow almost 100,000 young people to learn about their country.

Further, our government invests more than \$330 million annually to support young Canadians through the youth employment strategy. We will provide an additional \$50 million over two years to assist more young people in gaining tangible skills and experience.

Last year alone, this investment helped to connect nearly 70,000 Canadian youth with the work experience and skills training they needed to build a foundation for success in the job market. Clearly this exemplifies our government's commitment to Canada's youth.

*Government Orders*

These are just a few measures in economic action plan 2012 and Bill C-38 that would deliver measurable results to Canadians and better respect Canadian taxpayer dollars. I am proud to say that our Conservative government has a record that is second to none when it comes to responsible fiscal management.

Among the many advantages of our responsible approach is that it preserves Canada's low-tax plan, fostering the long-term growth that generates high quality jobs for all Canadians.

Since 2006, our government has introduced more than 140 tax relief measures, with low-and middle-income Canadians receiving the greatest share of the tax relief. The overall federal tax burden is the lowest it has been in 50 years. As we learned today, tax freedom day is now over two weeks earlier under our Conservative government.

Bill C-38 further demonstrates our government's commitment to the responsible use of tax dollars. In this respect, this bill goes a long way for Canadians. I urge members of the House to hurry up and pass it.

● (1950)

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments, but I would categorize this bill as one of the most undemocratic bills in Canadian history, with the grouping of almost 70 laws that will be changed in one fell swoop.

The member highlighted a number of things, including the penny. However, I will ask about one issue that will be grouped in among the 70 pieces of legislation, the Fisheries Act, and the sweeping changes of the amendment of the Fisheries Act, specifically section 35 and changes to protecting fish habitat.

Could the member talk about the consultation that was done on this one small part of Bill C-38, which would change the fabric of Canada for many years to come?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, I believe there were two questions from the hon. member.

The answer to the first question, where the member talked about not having enough time to debate this bill, I would like to remind him that we have debated the bill for nearly six weeks. The bill was also referred to the finance committee, where it was further reviewed. The finance committee spent up to 50 hours studying Bill C-38. The subcommittee, studying part 3, spent an additional 18 hours hearing from witnesses.

I can tell the member opposite that in fact we have spent more time debating this bill than any other budget bill in the last 20 years.

With regard to the member's question about the Fisheries Act, under the current Fisheries Act all waterways are treated the same, as he knows. For example, man-made irrigation and drainage ditches in a field are treated the same as the Great Lakes. That does not make much sense. As farmers or municipalities will tell us from their experience, this rule discriminates against them.

Our changes focus protection rules on real and significant threats to fisheries and their habitat that supports them, while setting clear standards and guidelines for routine projects. We are focusing on Canada's fisheries, not on the farmers' fields and culverts.

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the extensive consultations that have gone on for years on the Fisheries Act.

For years, the farmers in my riding have been complaining about the intrusive nature of the Fisheries Act, without any appreciable protection for fish. Municipalities have had to pay untold amounts of money, often for studies that cost more than the actual project is worth. We have certainly listened to the municipalities and to the farmers about the intrusive nature of this. It does not go to protect the fish at all.

I want to especially commend the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the parliamentary secretary for the work done on this file. I understand, as we all do, about how important it is, for example, to protect the fish in Lake Winnipeg, the Winnipeg River, but when my farmers cannot even clear out the cattails out of the ditches on their property because there might be a minnow in there, it is absolutely indefensible. This happens on a regular basis.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments on this subject. I would also like to point out that we are making the conditions of the Fisheries Act permits enforceable. This means that proponents will have to comply with conditions set out in authorizations or face penalties for the first time.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are significant changes to the regulatory oversight for our petroleum energy industry in the legislation. In today's *Globe and Mail*, Barrie McKenna argues that the bill actually undermines the NEB's authority and independence and turns back the clock on five decades of credible resource regulation. He says "The omnibus bill gives Ottawa carte blanche over as many as 750 decisions a year".

Further, he quotes the president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, CAPP, as saying, the NEB, as it existed, "play a very important role in ensuring that we've got [a] secure, reliable, affordable energy supply for Canadians, and sustainably develop our abundant energy resources".

The industry supported the NEB as it existed, so why is the government making this change and reducing oversight?

● (1955)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, Canada's environmental review process, as it currently stands, does not serve the cause of environmental protection as well as it should. There is currently no direct enforcement mechanism in place under the current Environmental Assessment Act to ensure liability. In the federal government, accountability for environmental assessments rests with many different departments, causing duplication and overlap. We are eliminating that so we have a more efficient system that will work for Canadians.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-38 is the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act. Much of Canada now knows that Bill C-38 goes well beyond tax and monetary measures to make major changes in dozens of policy areas, including the environment, natural resources and human resources. The previous speaker talked about being best positioned, that his party received 39% of the vote in the last election, which indeed gave it a majority. However, the Conservatives never once told people they would change EI. They never talked to the Canadian people in that election about changing the fisheries or environment acts.

Recently, the NDP, throughout the finance committee hearings, were clear that we believed that parliamentarians should not be asked to vote on legislation that granted cabinet power to make far-reaching regulatory changes as granted through Bill C-38.

Canadians now also realize that Bill C-38 has well over 400-plus pages. However, I also want everybody who happens to be at home watching tonight to understand that this is just the beginning. There will be another budget bill in the fall with further changes.

Our concerns, and those of many Canadians, go along these lines.

I would state quite categorically that the overhaul to the Environment Assessment Act does not belong in a budget bill. The government wants a one project, one review environmental assessment system, so it is repealing the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act that Canadians have known for many generations and replacing it with an environmental assessment act 2012.

The official opposition contends that this type of decision does not belong with the finance committee. The finance committee does not have the expertise, nor the time to bring before it the people required to complete a proper view. Bill C-38 sets out time limits for the completion of reviews and the minister will have the power to shut down a review panel if he thinks it will not finish on time. Before it can finish on time, it has to do a proper assessment for the benefit and protection of Canadians. That type of decision needs due diligence supplied by comprehensive reviews by experts, not by a minister, and certainly not five-minute rounds of questions in the finance committee.

Bill C-38 contains changes to employment insurance that are particularly concerning to maritimers. We all understand and know very well that our friends on the east coast have a different lifestyle. Our friends on the east coast are subject to the whims of part-time employment.

How does studying the proposed new EI definition, a suitable work, belong with the finance committee? It does not. It clearly belongs before the human resources committee. Bill C-38 would remove the definitions of suitable work from the Employment Insurance Act and would give the federal cabinet the power to create new regulations about what constituted suitable work and reasonable efforts to find that work. This budget bill, Bill C-38, gives no details on what the new criteria will be.

I will move to another section of Bill C-38.

How does the decision on removing the oversight of the Auditor General belong here? The Auditor General will no longer be

required to annually audit several agencies: the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Northern Pipeline Agency and the Canada Polar Commission. These agencies will now submit annual financial reports to the minister or ministers instead. How does putting these foxes in charge of the henhouse do anything for jobs and prosperity?

Bill C-38, with the swipe of a pen, would eliminate tens of thousands of backlogged immigration applications. Among the amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act is a move to wipe out the backlog of 280,000 applications under the federal skilled worker program.

● (2000)

These are people who placed their faith in Canada. They could have applied to other countries that needed their skills. These are skilled individuals. They made applications to become Canadian citizens because they trusted Canada. They were told that we needed their skills. We hear it in this House regularly how we need skills, but now those who applied before 2008 would have their applications deleted and refunded. The hopes and dreams of these qualified potential new citizens with skills that Canada needs would be set aside by a budget bill. This issue clearly belongs in a committee other than finance.

These changes would not only destroy the dreams of people who trusted Canada, but imagine what would happen to Canada's once trusted reputation in these countries. How in the world can the government justify doing this within a budget bill, with the claim that it would improve our prosperity?

One of the more ludicrous parts of Bill C-38, which one of the previous speakers mentioned, is how the Fisheries Act changes came before the finance committee. Even if we have concerns, and I trust the word of members on the other side when they say they have concerns with the Fisheries Act, the finance committee is not the place to turn to.

I happen to be the NDP human rights critic for international affairs. I shook my head with dismay when I read that Bill C-38, the budget bill, would scrap the office of the Inspector General of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. We have good people in our police services and we have good people in CSIS, but this office is meant to be the public safety minister's eyes and ears overseeing CSIS. In my opinion, in the shadowy world of CSIS, it is critical to have civilian oversight.

Bill C-38 would shut down several government-funded groups and agencies, such as the National Council of Welfare, the Public Appointments Commission, Rights & Democracy, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal, and Assisted Human Reproduction Canada.

*Government Orders*

Bill C-38 would create a new social security tribunal to hear appeals of decisions made under the Old Age Security Act, the Employment Insurance Act and other benefit programs. The bill would create a new Shared Services Canada department. We had people who were part of tribunals looking into the situation of appeals for people on Employment Insurance. They were experts and had jurisprudence in that area. Now that would be done away with and these same people would be lumped in. These are good people who have worked hard for us. I have no doubt that some of them would apply, but it would be housing too much responsibility for too broad a front with too few people.

Bill C-38 would change the age of accessing OAS from 65 to 67. I will not say very much about that because I have spoken in this place many times on it. I will simply say that the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the OECD pension review team said it was sustainable. There is a clear disagreement.

Government members will say that this is not the longest budget bill in history. That is true. They will say that it is receiving hours of debate. That is also true. However, what they do not say is that the changes I have outlined and others should have been before a number of different committees of Parliament.

My rights as a member of Parliament have been pushed aside and the rights of every member on both sides of this House have been pushed aside by the bill. We are not able, nor allowed, to do the due diligence necessary to protect the rights of Canadians. In my opinion, when Canadians look at the bill and see what it actually is, they will see that the better name for the bill is the “eliminating transparency and settling old scores act”.

● (2005)

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek for his comments. It seems that the cuts he spoke of affect mostly the disadvantaged and marginalized, people who can least afford it.

One program to be cut is the community access program which provided needed funds for communities to provide computers and Internet access to people who can least afford it; people in urban areas and particularly rural areas where they do not have 100% connectivity. In Guelph, there are at least 300 people a day who use it at the library.

Could my friend comment on the dramatic effect this would have across Canada?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. I visited a library in Hamilton within the last two months and I watched people accessing the Internet via computer. I watched their excitement. Most of these people were 40 and older and had no access of their own. They could not afford it. Some were looking for work, some were playing games, some older people had their grandchildren there. Overall we had a community place in our library that was vibrant again, more than I had ever seen it before. I had a sense that these people had hope. That has just been snatched away from them and that is disgraceful.

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1994 the Liberals introduced a budget implementation act which was overly large and a bit of an omnibus bill. At that time, one of the members got up and said, “Mr. Speaker, I would argue

that the subject matter of the bill is so diverse that a single vote on the content would put members in conflict with their own principles”. He went on to say, “Second, in the interest of democracy I ask: How can members represent their constituents on these various areas when they are forced to vote in a block on such legislation and on such concerns?” Then he said, “I would ask that you give consideration to this, Mr. Speaker. I would also ask the government members, particularly those who have spoken on precisely this question in the previous Parliament with precisely the same concerns, to give serious consideration to this issue of democracy and the functionality of this Parliament now.”

That person was the hon. member for Calgary West in 1994 and he is our Prime Minister now. How does the hon. member feel about the hypocrisy of this minister?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Speaker, I tend to put faith in the words I hear coming from various members on both sides of this House. I will not pass judgment on the words that were spoken previously by this individual. However, I will say that this individual ran an election campaign where his party did not tell Canadians what it was going to do. The Conservatives have a very slim majority of 39.9%. They would make changes at a level that would affect our grandchildren for years to come. The tragedy is they do not allow us to do due diligence on this and look at it appropriately. We have people sitting in this House whose own families would be impacted in a way that I doubt they understand. We have not done due diligence. We have not been allowed to. And worse, the Conservatives did not tell Canadians that is what they would do. From touring the country, talking to people on EI and on old age security, I can tell members that the Conservatives would not have gotten their majority had they told people the truth, and clearly that is why they did not.

● (2010)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek for his speech. I really liked his comments about the democratic problem with Bill C-38.

We are basically telling a majority of Canadians, millions and millions of Canadians, that they have exercised their right to vote, but that their representatives do not have the right to represent them; that they cannot represent them. They are being denied their right to speak and their right to vote.

Could the hon. member expand on this democratic deficit?

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** One of the sad things we saw in the last election campaign, and I am not assessing blame on whoever was guilty of this, was the attempt to suppress the legitimate right of Canadians to vote. Somebody did this. However, because of the approach of the government of the day relative to the operations of the day, it has taken away the incentive for Canadians to send us here, and that is a tragedy.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the chance to rise today in Parliament against opposition attempts to delay and defeat Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act.

Today's act includes significant and critical measures that form economic action plan 2012 to support Canada's economy and help fuel job creation, a budget that has been public and in debate since March, for over four months. Since March, today's act has received numerous and record-breaking amounts of debate, including the longest amount of debate at second reading and the most amount of time for committee consideration in over two decades when compared to other budget implementation bills.

Clearly, economic action plan 2012 is an extremely important document, and Bill C-38 is equally important. It is vital to the continued strength of the Canadian economy. I would really hope that opposition members would be less concerned about partisan procedural games to delay and defeat Bill C-38. Instead, I call on them to join our Conservative government and focus on helping create jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity. That is what matters to Canadians and their families. I am happy to report that we are getting real results to improve Canada's economy and job market.

Canada has the longest record of job growth in the entire G7 in recent years, with nearly 760,000 net new jobs created since July 2009, 90% full time and more than 80% in the private sector.

However, we cannot be complacent. The global economy remains extremely fragile and challenges remain, as we see in ongoing events in places like Greece and Spain. Such global challenges can ultimately impact Canada as we are not immune. For that reason, we are committed to the rapid implementation of economic action plan 2012. Our Conservative government, like many people across this country, is deeply disappointed with the NDP and other opposition parties that are trying to delay and defeat such key measures to support Canada's economy.

I want to read from a recent *Toronto Sun* editorial to illustrate that point, and I will quote at length as my colleague did earlier:

As Europe stands poised on the brink of a disastrous economic wildfire that could blacken the world, NDP leader's...self-obsession is in full flame.... vowing to delay the passing of that very same budget...by playing silly bugger with amendments and procedure.... This is nothing but grandstanding.... This is a budget designed to create jobs and inspire economic growth, and it comes to the House of Commons at a moment that can only be described as the 11th hour of a global economic conflagration.... Right now, there is only one enemy in our fight to protect Canada from the repercussions of Europe's burning. And it's [the NDP leader].... This is inarguable.

I completely agree.

By focusing on growth and job creation, the new measures in economic action plan 2012 will also solidify, strengthen and draw upon the role of entrepreneurs as the driving force behind Canada's economy. For example, the government is committed to ensuring that Canadians fully benefit from the economic opportunities associated with our natural resources, while protecting the environment.

We know that the existing system needs comprehensive reform. Today, Canadian businesses in the resource sector must navigate a maze of overlapping and complex regulatory requirements. This can

discourage potential new investors and undermine the economic viability of major projects while providing no additional benefit to the environment.

This is wrong, which is why we have worked since 2006 to streamline and improve regulatory processes. However, more needs to be done. Economic action plan 2012 responds to this need by introducing system-wide legislative improvements to streamline the review process for major economic projects.

● (2015)

We will reform the regulatory system so that reviews are conducted in a timely and transparent manner while safeguarding the environment. Today's bill includes a number of initiatives to meet this objective. For example, today's legislation would establish a new federal environmental assessment regime that would consolidate responsibility for assessments from more than 40 departments and agencies to 3 responsible authorities, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the National Energy Board.

The legislation would also set timelines for environmental assessments and provide for greater co-operation between jurisdictions. For example, the bill would amend the National Energy Board Act to establish time limits for regulatory reviews under the act and would enhance the powers of the chair and the responsible minister to ensure that those reviews are conducted in a timely manner.

The government's position on the environment is very clear. We can achieve our economic priorities while continuing to protect the environment. For example, economic action plan 2012 proposes \$13.5 million over two years to the National Energy Board to increase the number of inspections of oil and gas pipelines from about 100 to 150 inspections per year and double from 3 to 6 the number of annual comprehensive audits to identify issues before incidents occur. We must be vigilant in guarding our spectacular natural treasures and we must preserve them so we can pass them down to future generations. That is why protecting Canada's environment and the health of Canadians will remain a key government priority.

Other key measures in today's act deal with the housing market, amendments to improve oversight of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC. As we work toward getting our own government house in order, we continue to be mindful of other parts of the economy in need of careful stewardship. There is no doubt that housing has been top of mind for many Canadian families, and just as the government's management must be done with long-term objectives in mind, so too must the housing market be approached with a responsible, measured and long-term view so that it remains strong and stable over time.

*Government Orders*

In order to protect our housing market from excesses seen in other economies and to support the long-term stability of our housing market, our government has acted three times to adjust the rules for government-backed insured mortgages. These adjustments include requiring a minimum down payment of 5% for owner-occupied properties and 20% on speculative properties, reducing the maximum amortization period to 30 years from 35 years for mortgages with loan-to-value ratios of more than 80% and lowering the maximum amount Canadians can borrow in refinancing a mortgage to 85% from 95% of the value of their homes. We also withdrew government insurance from backing home equity lines of credit. In short, we discouraged some Canadians from using their homes as automatic bank machines and encouraged them to use their homes as saving vehicles.

Today's proposed legislation amendments are part of the government's continuous effort to strengthen the housing finance system. These amendments would strengthen the governance and oversight of CMHC and ensure that the corporation's commercial activities are managed in a manner that promotes the stability of the financial system. These enhancements include the additional objectives for CMHC to ensure its commercial activities promote and contribute to the stability of the financial system, including the housing market; legislative and regulatory authorities for the Minister of Finance in respect to CMHC's securitization programs; authorities for the superintendent to review and monitor the safety and soundness of CMHC's commercial activities and report to CMHC's board of directors and to the ministers of finance and HRSDC; and the addition of the deputy minister of human resources and skills development and the deputy minister of finance to CMHC's board of directors as ex officio members.

We will continue to act when necessary to support the long-term stability of Canada's housing markets and encourage savings through home ownership. For all these reasons, I encourage Canadians and the opposition to support Bill C-38 and help us get this bill passed today.

• (2020)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech. I listened quite attentively. Like all his colleagues, he unfortunately hides behind very simplistic reasoning.

I want to come back to the issue of job creation. Unfortunately, this government's track record when it comes to jobs is quite average, if not bad. We can talk in absolute numbers, with the creation of some 700,000 jobs since 2009, but in reality, Canada's population growth is very dynamic. For example, when we look at job creation in relation to population growth, Canada is a fairly average and ordinary achiever compared with Germany which, in relative terms, has created more jobs despite a much less dynamic population.

Why is my colleague, a government apologist, doctoring reality and hiding the not always profitable consequences of his government's policies from the Canadian public?

[*English*]

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Speaker, our country came out of a very serious recession two and a half years ago. Clearly, we were very fortunate and blessed to have strong leadership, strong management and a solid banking system.

To the member's comment about job creation, 760,000 net new jobs since the end of 2009 is extremely good performance, to my thinking, representative of the leadership of this country by our Prime Minister and our Minister of Finance. We are recognized amongst the OECD as being a leader in economic development and growth.

Having seen the success of our country as we have come out of that recession and how fortunate we are compared to other countries that have suffered so seriously, I think the member opposite should be applauding our government.

That is why I support our government and all the good work we have accomplished on this end.

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the question I have for my hon. colleague has to do with the employment insurance.

We know the government has decided to do away with the regional appeal boards. That was an opportunity, of course, for those who were appealing the decisions that were made by the government of whatever stripe. With the regional appeal boards, they would have an opportunity to appeal that decision in a face-to-face situation.

That will not be the case now. I guess what I am asking, because there are so few details in terms of what exactly would happen, is how the hon. member sees the new process working and how valuable that is compared to what existed prior to the changes,

• (2025)

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Speaker, we have had, again, a tremendous amount of debate on employment insurance and related topics of employment boards and the like across the country.

Clearly the development by the minister and by HRSDC has been to streamline the processes, to create more efficiency and greater effectiveness in our ability to deal with these situations. To that end, I think the boards as proposed would more than adequately meet the requirement.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, an important measure in the budget implementation bill is changes to the Fisheries Act that would, for example in rural ridings like ours, allow farmers to clean a ditch and not have to be caught up in unnecessary regulations, while allowing DFO to be focused on areas like the western basin of Lake Erie where the commercial fishery is very important.

I want to know what the member thinks of those positive changes that would allow DFO to be focused on what it needs to do and allow farmers to get on with what they need to do.

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Speaker, the changes that have been proposed would create greater efficiency and greater opportunity for those in the farming world to deal with their issues and those who are dealing with the habitat of fisheries to clearly focus on those issues directly.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the great pleasure this evening of taking the floor in the House to debate Bill C-38.

I will honour my colleagues across the way, who truly love superlatives—they thirst for them—and congratulate each other a lot. I must admit that, to my eyes, to my knowledge, Bill C-38 is an important, if not a crucial, part of the greatest plan to dismantle the country ever seen since Confederation. It is a massive and destructive operation that my colleagues opposite are praising and supporting without it weighing on their conscience, despite the millions of victims it will create in Canada.

It is very important to frame it this way because not all of our actions are innocent, on the contrary. Our actions have significant immediate and, of course, future consequences.

One of the very important aspects of Bill C-38 is that it is just one step more after many steps of significant cuts to the Canadian state, to various government operations, be they direct operations involving individuals or operations involving all the provinces of the Canadian confederation.

This reminds me of another sad, dark time in recent history: in the mid-1990s, Chrétien and his finance minister made harsh cuts that hurt everyone in Canada.

Obviously, there are many ways to address certain problems, and the government just needs a little imagination and a little willingness to talk to and co-operate with other partners to seek and find solutions that are the lesser evil—as they say—to problems that seem insurmountable or inescapable. At the very least, the government must avoid subjecting vulnerable members of society to pointless suffering. That is truly inescapable.

As Christ said, “You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.” He did not want his disciples to collect money for the poor at the risk of forgetting to concentrate on his message.

Here is another parable, an important one, to illustrate just how drastically this government is compromising our heritage and the future of all Canadians of all ages. I will focus on young people, but people of all ages—including seniors—may find themselves paying a heavy price.

It is the parable of the prodigal son, who asks his father for his share of the inheritance immediately. He quickly wastes every last bit of his money on strangers.

That is what is happening here. Instead of taking care of things at home, the Conservatives are slashing taxes, adding counter-productive exemptions, being careless and adopting questionable practices vis-a-vis foreign investors. I know what I am talking about because I can see this in my very own riding. Much to my chagrin the members opposite told me in their responses that I am against investors and against economic growth.

I have a question. When an honest worker or a retiree is deprived of tens of thousands of dollars, even hundreds of thousands of dollars, that he worked hard to put aside in a private pension fund,

through the fault of a foreigner who does not care about the fate of those who work for him, and this happens because of loopholes in the Canadian legislation, what type of society are we building for the future?

● (2030)

It will be a society of the poor who will serve the very small, very wealthy minority. Does the government opposite want the New Democrats to be a party to this operation? I am saying no. I am shouting no. We especially do not want to be party to that, absolutely not.

This government has used the absolutely—or probably, I will hold back a little—most simplistic arguments to defend its bill. They are the most simplistic arguments ever presented in this House. It is absolutely incredible to be given a mess of figures without any context, which flies in the face of reality and shows contempt for the truth.

It is truly appalling to see this government, in its operation of massive destruction, clearly targeting all those with the necessary empirical knowledge to understand what will happen now and in future years with Bill C-38. An incredible number of scientists have been fired, attacked, muzzled, and told to shut up. We are talking about people who have spent many years of their lives studying and, furthermore, dedicating themselves to a vocation: to serve the truth and all of society.

How can a government be so mean and contemptuous toward the intellectual elite of our society? It is a true horror to see that. Bill C-38 sanctions it. The government sets itself up as an enemy to science, to intellectuals and to people who have knowledge they can use to the benefit of society. Let us call a spade a spade. That is exactly what is going on here.

When you get down to it, Bill C-38 is a massive attack on millions of Canadians, be they retired or entrepreneurs. When we talk about employment insurance-related measures, it is mainly an attack on entrepreneurs who do seasonal work in logging, agriculture and fishing operations. Even in urban areas, let us think about people who work in construction and road repair. Quebec City is one of Canada's snowiest cities, and every winter in Beauport—Limoilou I have seen hundreds of skilled tradespeople and operators of heavy machinery clearing snow during the night after storms or heavy snowfalls. All these people depend on employment insurance not only to make ends meet, obviously, and to find a way to meet the city's needs, but also to preserve and protect their particular expertise that cannot be applied year-round.

This government is deaf and blind to this reality that affects millions of Canadians. It is absolutely unbelievable to see this kind of thing.

*Government Orders*

One of the clearest signs—and I will end with this—that the government does not care in the slightest about those millions of Canadians is that they are constantly boasting about the fact that this is going to bring a lot of prosperity to all Canadians.

However, one of the clearest signs that many Canadian households spend every last dollar of their income each week or month is that, currently, there is \$500 billion in unused RRSP contributions, unused RRSP tax credits. It means that those millions of Canadian do not even have the means to save, and this government does not care. Actually, the only thing that it seems to care about is to force them to save at the expense of the bread and butter that they could be putting on the table.

● (2035)

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are not completely opposed to everything in this budget. For example, we are not opposed to the elimination of the penny nor to the funding for employers to hire new employees. That was in our NDP program, actually.

However, we are opposed to the government interfering with old age security and employment insurance, when we know that the government has not contributed one penny to the EI fund since 1990. The workers, the employees and the employers contribute to it.

We are also opposed to the government interfering with the environment, especially—and I would like to have the hon. member's opinion on this—when it introduces a bill in which it hides about 70 pieces of legislation—legislation that should not be there because this is not an omnibus bill—of which 30% deal with the environment and are all very well concealed. People may say that we are opposed to the budget, but we are not opposed to everything in the budget; we are against this way of doing things and we are against the fact that the government is hiding all these things in it.

Could the hon. member comment on that?

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles for her question. She has actually raised a very important point and that is how incredibly mean-spirited the government is in conducting the business of the House.

It is really unfortunate and I have been able to observe it a number of times at the Standing Committee on International Trade, as well as at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. On many occasions, we have reached out to this government to work together for the well-being of all Canadians and to try to find the best solution in a friendly way.

The hon. member brought up a very important point and that is that, by putting forward this assortment of poison pills, the toxic and corrosive cocktail that is Bill C-38, this government is simply eliminating any good little measures that we could have approved.

Ultimately, the government is simply trying to kill the opposition and to bend any form of opposition to its almighty will. This lack of insight and this disrespect for the majority of the Canadian population are completely unbelievable.

[English]

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had earlier asked the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek about the community access program, and I know that my friend opposite is from Quebec. I am wondering about the following.

The community access program is used by so many urban people who would otherwise not have access to computers or to the Internet, particularly in rural areas where they do not have 100% connectivity. It is very important for those who are marginalized, who have little income and certainly not enough income to afford computers or Internet access. I wonder to what degree the entire removal of that program would affect the people from Quebec.

● (2040)

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Guelph for his question. Both my son and I have used this program because there were computers available in a community centre just steps away from my house. I was able to see how this was in the interest of the people who could not afford computers or Internet services, which are still quite expensive.

Let me go back to the fact that \$500 billion in RRSP exemptions are unused. That represents millions of Canadians with modest incomes. I remember very well that the community access centre was used by retirees and young people. At the time, I was a warehouse worker and my income was more limited. Without such a program, my son would have not been able to have access to the Internet, just like a number of his school friends.

The loss of this program is tragic given how little it costs. Let me repeat that the government is very mean-spirited to cut this program, which is actually working very well.

[English]

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week we were treated to the unbelievable sight of the Leader of the Opposition demanding that Canadian taxpayers bail out failing European banks. I confess I initially gave the Leader of the Opposition the benefit of the doubt. I assumed that he had misunderstood the situation because as an honourable Canadian, clearly he could not seriously have been proposing that the ordinary working people of this country, the people the NDP members claim to represent, should, from their hard-earned tax dollars, relieve the distress of Europeans who have lived for far too long on money borrowed from the next generation. No, I could believe no such thing; it was preposterous.

*Government Orders*

However, over the weekend, my hon. friend from Markham—Unionville, in fact a former finance critic for the Liberal Party and in a past incarnation a prominent banker of a leading Canadian bank no less, called for a massive bailout. It is impossible that he does not understand economics and I know the member to be a patriot. So I wondered what malign influence could possibly have come upon him, in his disturbed slumber perhaps, and vexed his waking hours with doubt over what is clearly in the best interests of the very people who entrusted him with their vote. Alas, I am sorry to say that his confusion about who is actually responsible for European debt, that is, either European taxpayers or Canadian workers, could be traced to none other than the leader of his party, the hon. member for Toronto Centre.

Unbelievably, my hon. friend stood in this very House today and said that any Canadian transfer to the IMF “goes on our books as an asset”. Perhaps I should not say “unbelievably”, for some who have known my colleague from Toronto Centre for a long time and are all too familiar with how he looks at government finances would say that his reaction was to be expected. Indeed, it is completely believable that the former NDP Premier of Ontario would have an auto worker from Windsor, or a fisherman from my own New Brunswick riding, or a hard-working grain farmer on the Prairies stake his or her meagre assets upon the management expertise of a European bank, or the financial acumen of the people who continued to lend money to European governments long after debt loads had climbed into the red zone; and completely believable that Canadian taxpayers, in need perhaps of a medical procedure for which he or she must wait in line, should instead use his or her dollars to refinance the medical procedure enjoyed by a citizen of the eurozone some 10 or 20 years ago and paid for with borrowed funds. “Yes,” they would say, because for those who have carefully followed what the opposition members have had to say about public finances over the last 10 years, it is all very believable.

That is why those members are the opposition and should remain so. They do not understand economics 101. I am not even sure they understand the simple reality that if something cannot go on forever, it will eventually stop. We know we cannot fight debt with debt, we cannot borrow our way to prosperity and we cannot expect to run deficits forever without hitting the wall. The question is, will Europe stop before it hits this wall or will it simply crash into it?

Europe is a rich continent. It has 10 times the population of Canada. Many Canadians trace their ancestry to the countries of Europe and forever hold dear the heritage of their forefathers. Indeed, their fathers and grandfathers fought to liberate their ancestral homes from tyrannies. Therefore, we wish them well. However, Europe has lived too well for too long on borrowed money and the time has come for Europeans to deal with it. We do them no favours if we facilitate their addiction to borrowed money by sending them some of our own, for yes, we too have a debt.

Perhaps this is a good time for us all to review first principles. As former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once said, the facts of life are conservative. Well here are a few facts. One, people are better able to spend their own money than the government is able to spend it for them. Two, government does not create wealth; it only consumes, by way of taxes and usually even more taxes, the wealth created by entrepreneurs, labourers and investors. Three, if society

wants less of something, they tax it and, similarly, if governments want to encourage an activity like job creation, it ought to remove barriers, be those regulations that tie businesses in red tape or high taxes that drive away investment and encourage people to work less.

● (2045)

These are not new ideas, but they are appropriate ones when the goal is to foster a nation's long-term economic prosperity and they are ideas that Europe should adopt rather than asking other nations to bail it out.

That is why our government met the recession with a package of measures to make the economy grow, our economic action plan. That is why our government has made it a priority in that plan to eliminate the deficit. That is why our government has introduced vital reforms to labour, employment insurance, immigration and to regulatory review processes. This is done to stimulate growth, to build employment and to give people hope that their tomorrows will be better than their yesterdays and to spare them the hardships of a government that does not know its place.

We have two paths ahead of us: prudence today or austerity tomorrow. I choose prudence. That is why we keep taxes low and work to spend within our means. Low taxes reward the industrious. They encourage the enterprising. They lead to higher employment and they give ordinary people more power over their own lives to dispose of their income in their own interest as they see best.

It is no accident that Canada flourishes while others do not. It is not by chance that our Prime Minister says that Canada is an island of stability in a hostile world. This is the result of good, sound economic and fiscal policy.

I note that today, June 11, is tax freedom day. This is the day Canadian taxpayers stop working to pay taxes to all levels of government and, instead, start working for themselves and providing for their families. When our government won office this day fell on June 6 some six years ago. That is over two weeks later than it is today. This is an accomplishment we can be proud of for it has benefited millions of Canadians. I for one hope tax freedom day continues to arrive earlier and earlier and we as lawmakers push for that day to fall in April some day. That would be a tax freedom day for which we could all be proud.

*Government Orders*

Canadians have worked hard, paid their taxes and trusted their government to do the right thing by them. We respected their hard work, as they deserve. We have been good stewards of their taxes, as we should. We have delivered on that trust, as we are obliged to do. We will not repay them now by rewarding the foolhardy. We will not help the entitled in other lands to meet their exaggerated expectations.

I believe the measures in the budget will reduce Canada's overspending, which will ensure our economy remains strong and jobs continue to be created and generated here in Canada. That in turn will allow us to fulfill our election promises to provide income tax cuts for middle-class families.

This is a lesson Europe should learn. The path to prosperity and economic renewal is not the road that involves ever more debt and higher taxes. It will begin when nations live within their means and there is less debt and lower taxes. Regrettably, this would seem a lesson the leaders of the two opposition parties ought to know. No wonder they do not know how to respond to the crisis in Europe. They would have us follow them on the road to fiscal ruin here at home. To that we stand with taxpayers and we say no.

• (2050)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if the sole purpose of the government is to spend money, what is our purpose? What purpose does the government serve? What is the point of adding more members of Parliament?

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, as a government, we are spending billions of dollars to make sure our country will be strong in the future. But we are spending only what we can, and we are asking taxpayers to pay only what they can. Giving money also to the Europeans because they have problems too is not a priority for us. It is up to them to find solutions.

[*English*]

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague about what we have heard from the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. The minister acknowledged that her department did not conduct consultations on the changes to employment insurance that are in Bill C-38. She said that she had consulted members of Parliament from places like New Brunswick, like my hon. colleague.

I wonder if the member could confirm that the minister consulted him and that he among other Conservative MPs are really the source of these changes to employment insurance.

I wonder if my colleague feels that this will not have any negative effects on his riding, on companies like Ganong, on seasonal industries like the tourism industry in his riding and others. Is he really only representing the elite of taxpayers?

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, our party is the party that cut the GST. The member's party is the party that proposed we increase the GST.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** What about EI?

**Mr. John Williamson:** I will get to all that, but I want to start by pointing out that the member's party is the party of tax cuts for the

elite, and our party is the party of tax cuts for ordinary hard-working Canadians.

As to the reforms to employment insurance, I am proud to say that, yes, I was a member who was consulted by the minister. These are comprehensive reform packages that I believe will connect the unemployed with jobs that are available in their area. These are modest reforms that will lead to a better labour market. I do not believe there will be a negative adverse impact that the opposition continues to fearmonger about. These are—

**The Speaker:** I will just stop the hon. member there to allow for some more questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety.

**Ms. Candice Hooppner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that was an excellent presentation on what our government proposes to do for Canadians and what the opposition, with its left wing, very socialist ideology, is presenting to Canadians. I think it is very evident what Canadians have chosen.

Could my hon. colleague comment on the fact that the Liberals have moved so far to the left? In fact, I think they have talked about standing shoulder to shoulder with their union bosses. We know that members of the NDP are socially incredibly ideological and, in some cases, some of them are separatists and Communists.

Could my hon. colleague talk about the Liberals and their extreme move to the left, what danger that has to the Canadian public and what the alternative is as far as our Conservative government?

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, I do not like to speak ill of the third party. In the past, it has offered great leadership to this country at times, but I do worry about its future, given that its presumptive leader finds himself in a difficult situation. On one hand, when he is questioned by the official opposition, he is forced to defend the Liberal measures in the mid-1990s, which involved restraint and balancing the budget, measures that, I would concede, helped Canada through the downturn and measures we have built on and improved on.

At the same time, with the same measures, the leader of the third party is also rightly criticized for his record as the former and, I believe, failed premier of Ontario, which is a very difficult position to be in, because Canadian taxpayers can never be sure which policy the member would champion—that of taxpayers or, more likely, that of failed policies, which were on display today when he called for a bailout of European banks.

• (2055)

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-38, the 425-page omnibus budget implementation act. It would, among other things, gut Canada's environmental laws; break the Conservatives' election promise by raising the age of eligibility for OAS from 65 to 67; create uncertainty for businesses, workers and seasonal industries with changes to EI that attack rural Canada, Atlantic Canada and the provinces; and that would hurt Canada's international brand by tearing up 100,000 immigration applications.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

Bill C-38 imposes the Conservatives' unilateral decision to reduce health transfers to the provinces and territories. It allows the Conservatives to target charitable organizations they disagree with.

[English]

It would wipe out groups such as the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, Rights and Democracy and the National Council on Welfare. All of these groups have one thing in common: over the last 30 years, and in some cases more, these groups were independent. They were funded through the government, but they took independent positions based on evidence that was sometimes contrary to the governing party, which was, in some cases, Liberal governments, in other cases, Progressive Conservative governments. However, the current Conservative government is the first government that actually de-funded these groups simply because they disagreed with the governing party.

Bill C-38 would reduce the Auditor General's oversight on a number of government agencies, including the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Northern Pipeline Agency. It would reduce oversight on Canada's spy agency by abolishing the office of the Inspector General. It would repeal the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act. It would eliminate a number of the government's reporting requirements on climate change and public service jobs. It would make changes that experts warn are unconstitutional to parole hearings.

The finance committee spent a few days studying the legislation since the House last debated the bill. A finance subcommittee was struck to examine part 3 of the bill, which was focused on environmental measures. However, this study took place while the environment committee was travelling to Alberta and Nova Scotia, which limited the ability of key MPs with expertise on the environment to participate in the Bill C-38 study.

The subcommittee's report on Bill C-38 was a disgraceful whitewash. The main report did not include any reference to public opposition to the bill, with the exception of a single reference that completely misrepresented the testimony of former Progressive Conservative fisheries minister, Tom Siddon. Mr. Siddon, who was the fisheries minister from 1985 to 1990 in the Mulroney government, said:

They are totally watering down and emasculating the Fisheries Act.

They are really taking the guts out of the Fisheries Act and it's in devious little ways if you read all the fine print...they are making a Swiss cheese out of [it].

That was said by a former minister of fisheries, a Progressive Conservative activist and minister.

Mr. Siddon was part of a group of four former fisheries ministers, two Liberal and two Progressive Conservatives, who wrote a letter warning the government of the disastrous effect the bill would have on our fisheries.

The subcommittee's report endorsed the changes made to the National Energy Board despite having heard from witnesses who were overwhelmingly opposed to these changes.

Today, Barrie McKenna's article in the *The Globe and Mail* argues that Bill C-38 undermines:

...the NEB's authority and independence [and] turns back the clock on five decades of credible resource regulation... The omnibus bill gives Ottawa carte blanche over as many as 750 decisions a year. That is a lot of authority for Canadians with their X mark in the voting booth to grant a cabinet dominated by one man. It delegitimizes the NEB and injects needless uncertainty into the process.

Furthermore, industry was not calling for a lot of these changes. In fact, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, CAPP, stated that the NEB plays "a very important role in ensuring that we've got [a] secure, reliable, affordable energy supply for Canadians, and sustainably develop our abundant energy resources".

• (2100)

The main finance committee studied parts 1, 2 and 4 of the bill. We heard from officials and a total of 57 witnesses on the 636 clauses contained in parts 1, 2 and 4. To be blunt, the study was a farce. The committee's timeline was rushed, leaving us unable to examine many aspects of the legislation.

We were not given the chance to hear from a single witness outside of the government on a large number of the issues. For instance, we did not hear from any municipal leaders, despite the impact of Bill C-38 on communities.

The main finance committee did not hear from any witnesses from aboriginal groups, even though this bill proposes a number of changes that will impact them directly, such as changes to the First Nations Land Management Act. Parliament has a responsibility to consult with Canada's aboriginal peoples before making these changes.

National Chief Shawn Atleo did appear before the subcommittee. He said:

To date, first nations have not been engaged or consulted on any of the changes to the environmental and resource development regime proposed within Bill C-38...In its current form, part 3 of C-38 clearly represents a derogation of established and asserted first nations rights. If enacted, it will increase the time, costs, and effort for all parties and governments, as first nations will take every opportunity to challenge these provisions.

That testimony, by the way, before the subcommittee was expunged from the subcommittee's report, which the government of course controlled and basically wrote at the committee level.

We did not hear from any railway companies, even though Bill C-38 would increase their share of costs for railway crossings by 500%. The government did not allow us enough time to conduct a proper study of this bill.

The finance committee heard from only one witness on the issue of the changes to the oversight of Canada's spy agency, outside of government officials. That was Paul Kennedy, a former senior assistant deputy minister at public safety, responsible for national security activities and former chief counsel to CSIS, who called these changes to CSIS "sheer insanity".

The finance committee only heard from one witness on the changes to parole hearings who described the changes as unconstitutional. The Canadian Bar Association also wrote to the finance committee to warn us that these changes in Bill C-38 were unconstitutional.

*Government Orders*

Many of the witnesses we did hear from were overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the changes in the bill. Tyler Sommers of Democracy Watch told the committee:

I don't think that anyone, to the best of their abilities, could represent their constituents when there's a 500-page bill that affects virtually every aspect of Canadian society.

The issue here is not just the length of the bill; it is the breadth of the bill and the number of sweeping changes that are totally unrelated. The reality is we have an environment committee with members of Parliament, with expertise in the environment. We have an aboriginal northern affairs committee with members of Parliament, with an expertise in that area.

If we broke down this bill and not only enabled individual legislators at the committee to study the changes and the legislation in separate bills, but ultimately to vote on them, we would actually be respecting democracy and we would be respecting Parliament. However, the Prime Minister is not interested in that.

In terms of some of the changes on old age security and EI, the government is targeting some of the most vulnerable Canadians. Old age security changes are being rushed through. The Conservatives are saying that we should not worry, that they will not take effect for 11 years and that if people are 53 years old, they can start saving more money. For goodness sake, 40% of Canadians make less than \$20,000 per year. How are they supposed to save money on that? Who gets OAS? The reality is that 40% of the people getting OAS make \$20,000 a year or less and 53% make less than \$25,000 a year.

This is targeting Canada's most vulnerable. It is an affront to democracy and it is an affront to Canada's most vulnerable who will pay a price for this neo-conservative agenda, which is not well thought out and is an attack on some of Canada's lowest-income people, an attack on rural Canada and an attack on Atlantic Canada.

• (2105)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question about division 19 of part 4 of Bill C-38, which reduces government transparency when it comes to food safety by giving the minister the power to get around the law.

I would like to know how Canadians can be sure that what they eat will be monitored, checked and compliant so that they do not get sick and they do not have to sue certain companies because they or their children get sick.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate that question very much.

I share the hon. member's concerns. A reduction in government accountability for food safety is a very serious issue. This is another case where the government is making potentially very significant, negative or dangerous changes without involving experts or hearing their testimony.

I agree completely with my colleague on that.

[*English*]

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague recently wrote an excellent article in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* about the issue of income disparity across Canada.

How does he feel the bill will effect that problem, which is a real problem across the country?

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Madam Speaker, that is an important question because income inequality is a growing issue in Canada. It is important to say that this is not a partisan issue. It has grown over the last 30 years under different governments of different political stripes. Provincially, governments from the Parti Québécois to NDP, Liberal and Conservative, the issue of income inequality is not a partisan issue and we ought not approach it as such. I am concerned about certain measures in the budget, particularly around OAS, because they will hurt some of Canada's most vulnerable citizens, the lowest income citizens.

There have been some measures over the years which both Liberal and Conservative governments have put in place that have actually helped on the issue of income inequality, helping people get over the welfare wall. I will cite one.

In the fall of 2005, in the last mini budget of the Liberal government, we introduced something called the working income tax benefit. We were defeated a few months later, in January. However, the Conservatives brought the working income tax benefit back. I believe that tax benefit helps people get over the welfare wall. That is an example where two governments of different political stripes both believed in the working income tax benefit. That tax benefit can actually help address the issue of income inequality and barriers to progress faced by low-income Canadians. That is an example of the kind of best practice where we can work together across party lines in the House.

On Wednesday night, I believe we are looking at 5:30 p.m. for the vote on my private member's motion on income inequality. It simply calls for the House of Commons finance committee to study the issue and report back to the House on not only the causes of income inequality but also some of the measures that can potentially help it, including best practice models and policy ideas from other countries, to address the issue. I certainly hope we see a good level of support from all parties for the bill. It is a good opportunity for us to work together on an important issue.

• (2110)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, to speak on behalf of the people of my riding to Bill C-38, the budget implementation act, which speaks to the economic action plan for 2012, Canada's blueprint for jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

As has been stated elsewhere, under our current Prime Minister, Canada can fairly claim to be the best governed country among advanced democracies in the world. This year's federal budget would lock up Canada's lead.



*Government Orders*

I have listened very carefully to the comments made by the official opposition with regard to the legislation. What I found, and this is reflected in the comments I have received from my constituents who have followed the debate around the legislation, is that Canadians support the legislation, the efforts of our government to provide steady leadership on the economy.

There is a difference between questions about legislation, as opposed to opposition just for the sake of opposing.

As a member of this government, I am pleased to respond with facts. The fact is that Canada is the envy of the world during this time of turbulence in international markets. As an example, the budget comments put forth by the radical left-wing leader of the opposition is the disingenuous argument that Canada should not be exporting energy in the form of unrefined hydrocarbons. Confusingly, the other members of the opposition coalition suggest we should be refining bitumen from the oil sands here in Canada.

Therefore, quite apart from their real position in that they oppose any resource extraction whatsoever, they know that under the current regulatory regime the likelihood that environmental approval within a reasonable time frame occurring is absolutely nil.

The proper role of government is to allow for science-based decision making that is based upon facts. Bill C-38 would restore the balance to a regulatory bureaucracy that has become counter-productive to the environment and to the interests of all Canadians.

Canadians will never accept the opposition inspired left-wing voodoo economics precisely because what it proposes for the environment will destroy Canada's economy.

We believe that we can help the environment without destroying jobs. This is why I absolutely believe that Parliament needs to pass the legislation as quickly as possible so the Government of Canada can get on with the business of providing jobs, growth and economic prosperity to all Canadians.

What the opposition needs to focus on are the benefits the legislation would bring to our economy. Nowhere is that more important than in my home province of Ontario. The province of Ontario was once the undisputed economic engine of Canada. This is now disputed because the manufacturing sector in Ontario is suffering, not because of some ill-conceived NDP notion about some disease that is intended to confuse and divide, but because of the policies of the Liberal Party of Ontario that have taken away one of the primary advantages that built Ontario: economic, affordable power.

The province of Ontario has siphoned off tens of millions of dollars out of the pockets of Ontario energy users, particularly from households and our manufacturing base, resulting in a hollowing out of Ontario's once vibrant manufacturing sector. This is causing severe economic hardship among seniors and anyone else on a fixed income. It is causing the decline of Ontario's manufacturing sector and the jobs in that sector, not of some disease theory that has no relevance to our made in Canada experiences.

In the Ottawa Valley, which is a net exporter of energy, we have first-hand knowledge of Ontario's controversial so-called green energy act. Rather than generate clean hydroelectricity, we watched

the province of Ontario spill water over the Ottawa River power damns.

Ontario taxpayers pay American states millions of dollars to take our power. The province calls this negative wholesale electricity pricing. Most terrible of all, this situation is expected to get much worse as more hugely expensive, heavily taxpayer subsidized industrial wind turbines are being forced onto rural Ontario residents every day.

•(2115)

The time has come to stop this environmental madness.

In the last election, Canadians voted for our vision of Canada as a clean energy superpower. Building an economic strategy on a natural resources foundation is good for our economy and good for jobs. This strategy was good for Ontario in the past and is good for Ontario now and in the future. The time has come to move forward and take advantage of Canada's economic action plan.

Canada's economic action plan will provide \$107 million over the next two years to maintain safe and reliable operations at Atomic Energy of Canada Limited's Chalk River Laboratories. The Chalk River Laboratories of AECL, in collaboration with the National Research Council, have been actively involved in the development of clean, safe energy.

There is a strategic overlap between nuclear science and hydrogen technologies. Hydrogen and electricity are the only known forms of energy that offer zero emissions from motor vehicles. The challenge with using hydrogen as a fuel is not the burning of the fuel, as it burns very cleanly, with pure water as a byproduct, but the process to produce the hydrogen. A next generation nuclear reactor is one that generates electricity and processes heat with hydrogen as a byproduct.

Hydrogen can be generated from energy supplied in the form of heat electricity through high temperature electrolysis, HTE. Since some of the energy in HTE is supplied in the form of heat, less of the energy must be converted from heat to electricity and then to chemical form, so potentially far less energy is required per kilogram of hydrogen produced. While nuclear-generated electricity could be used for electrolysis, nuclear heat can be directly applied to split the hydrogen from water. Working at 950°C to 1000°C, high temperature gas-cooled nuclear reactors have the potential to split hydrogen from water by thermochemical means, using nuclear heat. Research by Chalk River Laboratories into high temperature nuclear reactors will eventually lead to a hydrogen supply that is cost-competitive as well as reliable.

*Government Orders*

Rather than paying other jurisdictions to take electricity or spilling water over the hydro dams, Ontario could be producing low-cost hydrogen today to power public transit. The Ottawa Valley has all the building blocks to start the hydrogen economy and the green energy jobs that go with it. The New Flyer bus company, with its maintenance facilities in Arnprior, is currently involved in a hydrogen-powered bus pilot project with financial assistance from the Government of Canada in British Columbia.

Ontario, with our natural advantages to develop the hydrogen economy, should be undertaking a similar pilot project in this province. Ottawa River power dams can provide electricity to power electrolysis as a cost-effective method to make hydrogen.

The Chalk River nuclear research labs are involved in cutting-edge activities such as developing hydrogen storage applications that are safe, reliable and economical. Nuclear energy is currently the only large-scale zero greenhouse gas-emitting source of electricity in Ontario that is not limited by geography or weather. Nuclear energy has helped Ontario reduce greenhouse gas emissions safely and competitively for over four decades. CANDU reactors have a unique Canadian design and an excellent safety record, and they can fuel with uranium or thorium. Nuclear energy could provide us decades, if not centuries, of time to find ways to generate more of our energy needs from affordable renewable sources or perhaps nuclear fusion at some point in the future.

According to the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, using nuclear generation to back up the variability of wind generation is uniquely available to Ontario because 55% of Ontario's power requirements are supplied by nuclear power plants.

Ontario needs Bill C-38 passed now so that we can start to deliver on the benefits of this legislation to the people of this province, and in doing so we help the rest of Canada.

• (2120)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we wonder whether this is about natural resources or Bill C-38. That said, tonight we have heard some rather alarming things. I heard two Conservative members go after both the Liberal and NDP opposition leaders. We were called communists and leftists and were accused of being a left-wing party. I just heard a speech that had more to do with natural resources than with Bill C-38. What is going on here?

I have a question for the member about Bill C-38, a bill that destroys everything in its path.

If the government is going after seasonal workers, as well as fisheries, agriculture, the forestry industry and tourism, what can provinces that make a living off these industries do to survive in the Canada of the future?

[English]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, I will answer the first part of that convoluted, non-directional question, which was how Bill C-38 and my speech relate to the subject at hand.

As power costs increase, the manufacturing sector moves out of Canada, and with it move jobs. Bill C-38 is all about jobs, growth

and long-term prosperity. The Government of Canada has put the requirements in place so that the entire country can take advantage of it.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, at the beginning of her speech, my hon. colleague talked about the government's economic record. I wonder if it bothers her that the government took office with the largest surplus of any government coming into office in Canadian history, a \$13 billion surplus; increased spending by 20%, three times the rate of inflation, over the next three years; and put Canada into deficit by April and May of 2008, six months before the recession began.

Second, how does she feel about the government's failure to commit to take any steps toward a new research reactor at Chalk River?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, the Canadian government is leading the G8 in terms of our economy. Since forming government, we have consistently paid down the deficit and debt. As a consequence, when the global economic downturn occurred in 2008, we were well positioned to stave off and weather the downturn.

The deficit that we are currently tackling is as a consequence of the stimulus that was provided during that time, stimulus that the opposition wanted to force the government out of office on if we did not take it. Any deficit that we are experiencing is as a consequence of the Liberal government forcing this upon the Canadian people.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I know the member comes from a rural riding. I want her to comment on how the changes with respect to the Fisheries Act would allow DFO to focus on critical fish habitats while allowing farmers to go about their business by not having to worry about, for example, cleaning drains. Would she comment on that?

• (2125)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, this is an issue not only for farmers and individuals but for municipalities as well. They would be ordered by the Ministry of the Environment to clear out their culverts. When they started to do so, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans would come around, spot a minnow and stop them immediately. Then they had to wait for permits. As a consequence, they ended up not meeting deadlines and having to pay more fines.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I gave a controversial statement last week right here on the floor of the House of Commons that made the national news and the talk of the town back home in Newfoundland and Labrador.

*Government Orders*

Although I had to later apologize for some unparliamentary language contained in that statement, which you, Madam Speaker, are familiar with, the sentiments were dead on the money. The sentiments were the opinions of my constituents, who are always right. The sentiments were direct quotes that I wrote down during a town hall meeting earlier this month in my riding of St. John's South—Mount Pearl, a town hall meeting called to discuss this Trojan Horse budget bill, a bill that is going over like a lead weight in Newfoundland and Labrador and across this country.

The controversial statement I gave last week was a top-five list of the best quotes from that town hall meeting. I intend to go over each of those five quotes, but members need not worry, because I will modify the unparliamentary language in one of those quotes to make it parliamentary, and then I will expand on each of those points.

Let me start with the number five quote. I will work my way down.

This is the number five quote, and it is in reference to various cutbacks in search and rescue:

It will come to the point where a mariner will be asked, "Are you up to your neck in water yet? No? All right, you're good, call back when it gets there."

That quote came from Merv Wiseman, recently retired as a rescue coordinator at the now closed marine rescue sub-centre in St. John's. Merv worked in search and rescue for more than three decades. He knows what he is talking about. Ironically, Merv Wiseman, who has drilled the Conservative government for its cuts every chance he can get, is also the same former federal Conservative candidate who ran against me in the 2008 federal election.

This omnibus budget bill—or, as some people back home like to call it, this ominous Trojan Horse bill—amounts to a gutting of what is left of DFO's stomach—science, research, search and rescue, all gutted.

In recent days, DFO announced that Canadian Coast Guard search and rescue vessel, the *Harp*, which was stationed in St. Anthony on Newfoundland's northern peninsula, will be decommissioned as a direct result of this ominous budget bill.

Last week six fisheries offices were closed in Newfoundland and Labrador, also as a direct result of this budget. The offices were in the communities of Trepassey, Arnold's Cove, Burgeo, Roddickton, Rigolet and L'Anse-au-Loup.

Last week I asked the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to travel with me to those outposts to look the people directly impacted in the eye and explain to them how job losses and shutdowns are going to somehow make the fisheries better. I wanted the minister to explain to the people, and explain to me, how they will be able to regulate the fisheries with no local offices. I say, and the people I represent say, and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador say, there is no explanation.

What the people of Newfoundland and Labrador want to hear is why the Conservative government is abandoning them. Good luck with that.

Other cuts to search and rescue include the recent shutdown of the marine rescue sub-centre in my riding of St. John's South—Mount

Pearl, with distress calls now rerouted to Halifax and Ontario, where there is a problem with language.

Some people have a problem understanding Newfoundland and Labrador's unique dialect or dialects, because the dialect varies from cove to cove. There is also a problem with understanding Newfoundland and Labrador's geography. Mainlanders often do not get us. Merv Wiseman says that will lead to the death of mariners. We cannot get a stronger statement than that. These cuts will lead to the death of mariners. People will die on the water because of these budget cuts.

His quote about it getting to the point where a mariner will be asked, "Are you up to your neck in water yet?", and to "call back when it gets there" may sound flippant, but there is truth in it. It is almost to that point. The water is rising. The Conservative government knows the water is rising and the Conservative government does nothing.

● (2130)

The number four quote was in reference to the attack on Atlantic Canada. "Perhaps we're paranoid, but that doesn't mean they're not out to get us", said Earle McCurdy, president of the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union, the largest fishermen's union in Newfoundland and Labrador. McCurdy added up all the various aspects of the ominous bill that are detrimental to Newfoundland and Labrador, including the cuts to DFO, the cuts to search and rescue, the changes to employment insurance, a reduction of air surveillance outside the 200-mile limit that keeps an eye on foreign trawlers in international waters, as well as the possible elimination of fleet separation and owner operator policies, which would kill off the traditional inshore small-boat fishery. He said when we start adding all that up and then recall how the Prime Minister described us as having a culture of defeat, it is fair to say that maybe the Conservatives do have it out for the east coast, that they do have it out for the Atlantic provinces, that they do have it out for Newfoundland and Labrador and payback for former premier Danny Williams' "anybody but Conservative" campaign.

I have news for the members. The only talk of defeat in the Atlantic provinces, despite what the Prime Minister says, is in reference to the Conservative government. People want the Conservatives brought down. They want the Conservatives and the Prime Minister defeated. That is the only talk of defeat where I come from.

The number three quote was in reference to environment legislation. "Less science equals less knowledge. It's basically like driving with the lights off", said Chris Hogan. He is the executive director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network. A full one-third of this massive 421-page, ominous, Trojan Horse budget bill is dedicated to environmental deregulation. The ominous budget would rip the word "habitat" right out of the Fisheries Act, cutting to the chase. Removing "habitat" would mean that if a fish does not have what is deemed to be economic value, it would be destroyed to make way for a pipeline or a mine. Fish would have even less value than they do today, if that is possible, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the federal cabinet would have even more power.

*Government Orders*

How scary is that? I heard the Minister of Public Safety say in this House today that the New Democrats would be worried if a single minnow were killed. Under successive Conservative and Liberal governments, commercial stocks such as cod, flounder, capelin, herring and on and on, have all been battered, beaten and decimated, one stock after another. I would not trust the Conservative government's Minister of Public Safety with a goldfish.

The government argues that all legislation contained within this Trojan Horse bill is to the economic benefit of the country. However, jamming so many major critical changes into a single bill means the proposed changes are not getting the scrutiny they require. I say the Conservatives are out to try to get one past Canadians.

The number two quote from my town hall meeting is this. "This Prime Minister isn't my Prime Minister. He's the CEO of corporate Canada and his cabinet are the board of directors", came from Ken Kavanagh, head of the Northeast Avalon Regional Economic Development Board. Under this ominous budget bill, development boards such as that one would lose their funding, funding that was provided by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. ACOA often goes where the chartered banks fear to tread. Add the development board funding to the list of items that make us paranoid that the Conservative government is out to get us, the growing list.

The number one quote—

• (2135)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time has elapsed. Perhaps the hon. member will have an opportunity, but I would remind the hon. member that he cannot say indirectly what he cannot say directly.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague opposite about the number one quote I got from my town hall, which was, "Why does the NDP leader want to give pink slips to the hundreds of thousands of people who work in the energy sector?" Why does he want to pit workers in one sector of the economy against others?

I would ask my colleague opposite why he will not support the energy sector and why he will not support the measures that are so common sense to support the long-term growth and prosperity and protect the long-term sustainability of our social programs here in this country.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** Madam Speaker, if the hon. member would like to invite me to her riding to speak to these people at her town hall, I would do it any day.

If it were not for the energy sector and the jobs in Alberta the hon. member speaks about, where I come from in rural Newfoundland and Labrador where our fisheries have been decimated, as I mentioned in my speech, would have sunk a long time ago.

What is happening in this country is that the Conservative government has lost the balance between the environment and business. Everything is at the expense of the environment. There has to be balance. The Conservatives have lost it.

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will ask my hon. colleague a question I asked of a government member earlier tonight and I did not get an answer because it was obvious there was not a full understanding or an appreciation for the issue.

With respect to the appeal boards, with the changes to EI that the minister is proposing, the regional appeal boards would go by the wayside and we would end up with just one mechanism for people to appeal, and they would have to do it online instead of that face-to-face opportunity where they really get to make their case.

What would that mean for people on EI? What would it mean for members of Parliament? What would it mean for families who have to rely on the appeal mechanism that would now be taken away from them?

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** Madam Speaker, the short answer is this. The loss of the appeal boards would mean that more people would obviously lose their appeals. More people would be forced off employment insurance.

I was asked another similar question last week by the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. He asked me whether or not there is an agenda by this Conservative government to force what people are left in rural parts of the country, in rural parts of Atlantic Canada, in rural parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, out of the rural areas, be it with the possible elimination of owner-operator fleet separation policies, which would kill the traditional inshore fishery, or be it with the changes to EI. The bottom line answer is yes; there is an agenda by the Conservative government to force out what people we have left in rural Canada. There is an agenda.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciated the hon. member's comments. I would like to ask him about the changes to 70 pieces of legislation that would happen with this omnibus bill.

However, I am on the edge of my seat. I want to hear the number one quote at his town hall meeting.

• (2140)

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question, but as the Speaker pointed out earlier, I cannot say indirectly what I said directly in that statement for the number one quote.

It was basically something to the effect that the Prime Minister does not really understand Newfoundland and Labrador. He does not understand the issues of Atlantic Canada. He views Atlantic Canada as having a culture of defeat.

As I said in my speech, the only talk of defeat in my province, in Atlantic Canada, is defeat of this government in 2015.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise tonight in support of Bill C-38, jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act.

*Government Orders*

Our government has been very clear that jobs and economic growth are our top priorities, the same today as when we were first elected in 2006. In fact, nearly 760,000 net new jobs have been created since July 2009, and 90% of those are full-time jobs. Our most recent budget reflects this.

In the words of Canadian Chamber of Commerce president Perrin Beatty:

We have urged the government to focus on where Canada needs to be five or 10 years from now, even if it means taking tough decisions now. The government has acted.... The result will be a stronger economy and more jobs.

That is what the budget implementation legislation before us today is all about. It is about ensuring that our economy continues to create dependable jobs and a high quality of life today and for the future.

To talk a little about the context of the bill, there is fragility on the global economic scene. We cannot deny that Europe is certainly in a debt crisis right now. As many Canadians know, one can only spend more than one makes for so long. We are seeing that in Europe right now, which is why our government has taken strong actions to move to balance our books while putting in policy that would ensure the long-term economic prosperity of this country.

In fact, as I mentioned earlier, our country has created more than 760,000 net new jobs since the financial downturn. The IMF has praised the stability of our financial sector. The OECD has praised us for our leadership in economic development and growth. We have also been called one of the best places to do business in the world.

We now have the opportunity to set the ball in motion to cement Canada's golden age on the world stage for years to come. This is especially important for people my age, younger, contemporaries and the children of my colleagues here in the House tonight.

We have the opportunity to ensure that Canada is that world leader for decades to come, which is what the bill is about. It is about that long-term prosperity, creating jobs and growth while ensuring that our financial house is kept in order. This is one of the unifying themes of the bill.

Why is the bill so urgent?

In Europe, we can see what happens if there are no financial policies in place to spur long-term economic growth. In fact, in Canada, one of the things we have been talking about here with my colleagues is the need to have stable funding to ensure the long-term stability of our social programs that we all hold dear, across the aisle here and around the House.

How do we do that?

We feel that the policies put forward in the bill would set that ball in motion, ensure that long-term prosperity and also ensure our books are balanced in the long term.

I would like to speak a little about the responsible resource development component of Bill C-38, in particular the environmental components.

It might surprise some of my colleagues opposite that, being from Alberta, I care deeply about Canada's natural heritage. Certainly my fellow Albertans would say how important the beauty of Banff

National Park and the wilderness of Canada's boreal forests are to them. This is our brand, and it is important to our health and well-being. It is something I have had the privilege of hearing about in my last year of elected office. Our government does feel we can have that balance, as my colleague opposite spoke about earlier, between environmental protection and economic growth.

In fact, as part of the bill, there are numerous measures that we put in place to strengthen environmental protection, about which I have not heard any of my colleagues opposite speak. We are focusing environmental assessments on major projects that have greater potential for significant adverse environmental effects.

The Commissioner of the Environment, in testimony at our subcommittee that reviewed this particular component of Bill C-38, spoke about how 99% of the reviews that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency conducts are what we call screenings on small projects, and 94% of those, in his words and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's words, have little to no environmental impact. This means that our major oversight body for doing environmental reviews is spending time on things like reviewing the expansion of a maple sugar bush plant or adding a park bench in a Canadian national park.

● (2145)

To counter that, we are trying to ensure that our resources dedicated to reviewing environmental assessments are spent on major projects that have significant environmental impact. The commissioner of the environment, in his testimony before that committee, agreed that those resources currently spent on environmental assessments with limited environmental impact could be better spent on major proposals.

For the first time we would be introducing enforceable environmental assessment decisions under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. This means that proponents of major projects would have to comply with conditions set out in the decision statements or perhaps face tough financial penalties. We would require follow-up programs after all environmental assessments to verify the accuracy of predictions regarding potential environmental effects and to determine if mitigation measures were working as intended.

I could go on and on, but I notice that my time is quickly elapsing. I want to talk about why it is important that we also focus on developing our natural resources in a sustainable way. The importance of our natural resources is well known in my riding of Calgary Centre-North. Their impact is felt from coast to coast. I feel a kinship with my colleague opposite who talked about how some of the people in his riding have seen the impacts of that. That is something we could all agree on.

*Government Orders*

However there are some statistics I want to talk about specifically with regard to the energy sector. New oil sands development is expected to contribute over \$2.1 trillion 2010 dollars to the Canadian economy over the next 25 years. The oil sands alone will pay an estimated \$766 billion in provincial and federal taxes, and provincial royalties over the next 25 years. That is our health care system. That is our OAS system. Those revenues will directly go to funding our social programs here in this country. I agree that we need to talk about how those resources are developed sustainably. That is why we have put things in place like the oil sands monitoring framework. That is why we are working with provincial governments and talking about things like land use planning.

There was something I wanted to highlight that blew my mind a bit. It happened in the subcommittee with someone I respect and have had meetings with, Mr. Stephen Hazell, a well-respected environmental lawyer.

He made a comment, and I am not sure if it was tongue-in-cheek or not. I want to read the testimony into the record. I said to him, "You made a comment that was something to the effect of 'I saved Exxon \$1 billion, but they are not likely to thank me for it.'" This was with regard to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline project. I asked, "Could you walk me through the line of thinking on that again?"

I encourage my colleagues opposite to read this testimony. At the end of it, the point he was trying to make was that, with the delay and the long EA process, the price of gas went from \$6 to approximately \$2. The project was no longer viable. Therefore, he saved the company money.

The point I wanted to make was that is not how we do business in this country. We support industry and free market principles. Business should be able to take risks. While it is absolutely true that we need to protect the environment and make sure that our environmental assessment process is robust, we also need to make sure that there is timeliness and predictability so that project proponents can ensure that the process is factored into their business decisions.

Few people talk about the window-to-market concept. For major resource projects that are very capital intensive, there is a timeline in which the project may or may not be viable.

We need to make sure as regulators that we ensure robustness in process. I feel very strongly that this is included in the new review process. We also have a duty to ensure that those processes are completed in a set period of time so that there can be predictability around planning for that window to market.

That is a principle that I hope we can just take the tone down a little bit and have a reasonable dialogue on. A strong national resource sector and energy sector is important to this economy. I agree that we need to have that strong environmental protection component, but that is locked into this process.

The opposition parties are talking about bailing out Europe when we should be talking about how we make our economy strong and prosperous over the next 25 years. Bill C-38 does that. I am so proud to be here in this House tonight with my colleagues to stand in support of it.

●(2150)

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member says we should tone down the debate and try to get on with reasonable business just after she completely misrepresented the testimony of one of the witnesses who came before our subcommittee. The witness was making a point tongue-in-cheek, but he was making the point nonetheless. The member, again tonight, spoke in very disrespectful terms about what was said. She did the same thing the night that he appeared before committee. How does the member feel that dealing with witnesses, Canadians who come forward and give us their thoughtful and reasoned opinions, in such a disrespectful manner is in any way toning down debate?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Madam Speaker, while my colleague opposite might have felt it was a tongue-in-cheek comment, this comment was germane to how the opposition has presented the amendments put forward in the bill. Therefore, it is an absolutely valid point to go after. I encourage my colleagues opposite to read that testimony because I think it is very telling.

We are talking about dealing with witnesses. My colleagues opposite have misrepresented the consultation process on this bill so grossly in the media. We have heard from associations that represent over three million workers across the country. We should be respecting them as well.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, a few minutes ago, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke suggested that the reason we have a deficit now is because of the stimulus spending, and that there was not one until then. I wonder if my hon. colleague agrees with that, in view of the fact that by April and May of 2008, six months before the recession began, this government had put the country back into deficit, that the budget brought down eight or nine months later, in January 2009, was for the 2009-10 fiscal year, which did not start until April 1, 2009. That was a year after the deficit of this government began. Of course, that money did not really go out the door. If we look at the record, we will see that the municipalities were complaining the following summer of 2009 that it still had not started. Really, the stimulus money did not actually start until the fall or late 2009. Therefore, how can the member opposite claim that the deficit was created because of the stimulus spending?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Madam Speaker, the stimulus funding that our government put forward was short-term, targeted and designed to create jobs while creating the infrastructure our country needed. Municipalities across the country lauded the economic action plan funding and we have a legacy of that funding. It did spur jobs and growth.

Regarding his comment about municipalities, our government was the first to make the municipal gas tax transfer payment permanent.

Also, the Liberal Party today tried to give a convoluted answer about why it was great to bail out Europe as opposed to managing our own financial house here in Canada.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I was pleased to have the Parliamentary Secretary in my riding, along with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, to hear from the municipalities of Chilliwack, Hope, Kent and Harrison Hot Springs. While we were there we discussed how some of those municipalities were spending more money on environmental consulting than on the works on their drainage ditches to keep the roads open and the fields dry.

The one story I recall was in the city of Chilliwack, where DFO allowed the city to clean one half of a ditch, but it was not allowed to clean the other half. Could she talk about how ridiculous some of these policies are and how this budget will clean some of that up?

● (2155)

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Madam Speaker, Bill C-38 contains common sense measures to ensure that the working landscape principle is protected and that fish habitat is still there. However, we also have to ensure that farmers can use their fields.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise again today to speak to Bill C-38, this time at report stage. I made a speech on May 8, 2012, at second reading of this bill. It will be very easy for me to repeat the same points.

I could repeat all of my notes word for word, since this mammoth bill made it through the Standing Committee on Finance in less than a week, and we are now at report stage with the same bill, without amendment.

The government's insistence on pushing through this bill in the face of strong opposition from across the country is, in my opinion, a serious problem. I would like to quickly remind members of some examples of problems that the official opposition has brought up in recent debates on this bill.

Bill C-38 aims to implement budget 2012, but it goes well beyond the budget. It contains not only the measures described in the budget, but also several changes that were not announced previously.

Consider the environment. My colleague opposite was talking about it five minutes ago. At least one-third of Bill C-38 is dedicated to environmental deregulation. It is 2012, and here we have a budget that promotes environmental deregulation. Yes, the government is doing what it said it would in terms of the environment, such as withdrawing from the Kyoto protocol. People did not agree with that, yet the government not only stood its ground, it also added new, previously unannounced measures.

As we all know, Bill C-38 repeals the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, which means that the government is no longer required to report its greenhouse gas emissions. That is a major problem.

Bill C-38 also repeals the current Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, replacing it with a new assessment regime designed for the approval of major projects, such as oil pipelines, naturally. In my opinion and that of all environmental groups and my colleagues, this measure renders all environmental protection regulations utterly meaningless.

Bill C-38 also targets environmental groups. It changes the rules used to determine the extent to which a charity is involved in political activities.

The bill also gives the Minister of National Revenue the authority to suspend the tax-receipting privileges of a registered charity that devotes too many of its resources to political activities. What is the limit here? What exactly defines the political activities of a charitable organization that might sometimes oppose a government measure? Strangely, this attack directly targets groups that oppose the government's ideas. How interesting. Soon the Conservatives will be attacking freedom of expression.

I can also talk about our seniors who worked their whole lives, who worked hard for many years. They will be forced to work two more years before they can retire. I am sure everyone here knows that my party has been opposed to this measure for quite some time. We continue to oppose it and we will not back down.

Bill C-38 also attacks industry and agriculture. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is one of a number of agencies that will be excluded from the Auditor General's supervision. The bill eliminates all references to the Auditor General in the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act. The government is giving itself yet another power.

For instance, the part of the act that was once called "Accounting and Audit" will henceforth be called simply "Accounting". Talk about transparency.

Mandatory financial and performance audits by the Auditor General have also been eliminated—another excellent example of transparency.

I could go on and on. Bill C-38 also amends the Seeds Act to give the president of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency the power to issue licences to persons authorizing them to perform activities related to controlling or assuring the quality of seeds or seed crops.

● (2200)

This change opens the door to allowing private entrepreneurs to do food inspection-related work. It also sends a troublesome message about the growing use of privatization. In other words, the rich might get access to safe food, but the government does not seem to care what everyone else gets. That is the message I am hearing.

The *Canadian Medical Association Journal* has been highlighting the loopholes in our food safety system for a long time and has warned that Canadians will be eating at their own risk, which is serious.

*Government Orders*

The NDP has held a series of public consultations across Canada to listen to the comments and concerns of Canadians. On June 2, I personally invited people from my riding to share their concerns and to ask questions. Representatives from Mouvement Action Chômage; the president of the local chapter of the Union des producteurs agricoles, the UPA; and the president of the Conseil québécois de l'horticulture joined the panel of guest speakers.

Mouvement Action Chômage is particularly concerned about the changes to employment insurance. We have been talking about it for several weeks. However, the government does not seem very open. The NDP is worried about seasonal workers who will have to broaden their job searches and work for less, down to 70% of their current salary. SMEs will be affected by these measures and it will be hard for them to provide their employees with enough hours, to retain their employees and to train them properly.

For a riding like mine, these changes will have considerable repercussions on the availability of qualified labour, which is also a problem. As I have said, the SMEs will have to pay the costs.

It is also interesting to point out that the SMEs represent a significant percentage of the jobs in Canada. If we want people to have jobs, it is important to help those who provide them—SMEs, for example—but that does not seem to be logical for this government.

In agriculture, the UPA local in Montérégie has complained about the repercussions of the cuts on the region. In eastern Montérégie, of which my riding is part, the growing forward program represents 47% of agricultural income in Quebec. It will not be just my riding that is affected; Quebec will be affected too.

There are also repercussions on research and on the development of new types of agriculture. Canada is a highly agricultural country and my constituency is especially so. Many constituents have asked questions about agriculture. One of them also asked me what would happen with the aboriginal communities in the north. There is nothing in the budget for them. For Attawapiskat, for example, the government has done nothing, and is still not doing anything.

I also remind the House that the budget contained nothing about housing and homelessness. Even though all these measures will plunge more Canadians deeper into poverty, there is nothing to help them.

Canadians are afraid of this bill, a monster bill. People in my riding have realized that the government has very, very loose parliamentary rules. People are not stupid; they know that they still have the power and that public pressure can make a government back down. The government is fully aware that, in less than four years, it will have to be accountable to all Canadians. If the government continues to lose the confidence of the people, they will not give it a second chance.

• (2205)

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I wanted to ask the hon. parliamentary secretary a question, but I will instead ask my colleague because she raised some very legitimate doubts about environmental protection.

When the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment gives us statistics on the expansion of the oil sands, we have a problem. When the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment tells us about large oil companies, we have a problem. We have a very big problem here. We are seeing where this government's priorities lie.

During her 10-minute speech, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment barely spoke about environmental protection. However, she did speak about the interests of oil companies and the oil sands. It is totally absurd.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about the government's utter lack of transparency and willingness to protect the environment.

**Ms. Marie-Claude Morin:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her very intelligent question.

Indeed, I find it very absurd that the hon. member is not at all concerned about real environmental protection and the conservation of our environment, which is of paramount importance to Canada. Instead, the hon. member is concerned about the interests of large corporations and big oil companies.

That is a real problem, especially since environmental groups are being attacked here, when they have been doing an outstanding job for years with very limited resources. They do a lot with a little. Those groups are being attacked and large corporations are getting a hand up. That is a bit illogical, and it is very disturbing.

I do not have any children yet, but when I do, I intend to leave them a healthy country and planet. That is not what is currently happening with our government. I am particularly concerned about that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for her insightful and very interesting discussion.

I want to ask her if she has been to the oil sands and if not, whether she is planning on going to the oil sands.

I think that if every member here were to actually go out and visit things, they would get a different perspective. We often speak in ignorance. I just want to know, has she actually been to the oil sands to see them first-hand?

The second part of my question is this. Why is the NDP actually filibustering and trying to keep the government from moving forward and doing positive things for the environment? That is exactly what the parliamentary secretary wanted to do. Indeed, we want to create that wonderful balance so that we have jobs and a healthy environment.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Claude Morin:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.



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My answer to him is that I also invite him to come visit my riding so that he understands the reality of agricultural workers, the reality of agriculture in my riding. That would be very interesting. Perhaps we should also go to the riding of the hon. member who spoke previously to meet the fishermen who are seasonal workers. It might be an interesting experience to finally expand our horizons a little.

No, I have never visited the oil sands, but I would be more than happy to go if the hon. member invites me.

[*English*]

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much this opportunity to highlight some of the very important initiatives in the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, and to underline why we cannot let the NDP and the opposition more generally delay and defeat this important legislation.

Over the last few weeks we have seen the extreme left-wing ideology of the opposition members, not only in terms of their negative attitude toward such an important industry in Canada as our energy sector, but also most recently in the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition, as well as the leader of the third party, in their ridiculous idea of pumping millions and billions of dollars of good money after bad into Europe. Canadians are seeing the reality and the left-wing socialist ideology behind both opposition parties.

Let me begin by reassuring Canadians that unlike the NDP opposition, our Conservative government is focused on the economy, jobs and growth. While the opposition is looking at delay and conducting partisan games, we are focused on implementing economic policies that increase the prosperity and the well-being of Canadians.

Let me quote a recent Toronto *Sun* editorial for the benefit of the House. This is about what Canadians are saying about the NDP and the opposition delaying tactics. It states: "As Europe stands poised on the brink of a disastrous economic wildfire that could blacken the world, NDP leader[s] hypocrisy and self-obsession is in full flame.... vowing to delay the passing of [the budget] by playing silly...with amendments and procedure.... This is nothing but grandstanding.... Right now, there is only one enemy in our fight to protect Canada from the repercussions of Europe's burning. And it's [the NDP leader].... This is inarguable."

Indeed, since 2006, our government has supported the security and prosperity of Canadians and promoted business and investment to create jobs. When the global financial and economic crisis struck, these underlying strengths helped Canada to avoid a deep and long-lasting recession. Our government's sound fiscal position prior to the crisis provided the flexibility to launch the stimulus phase of Canada's economic action plan, which was timely, targeted and temporary in order to have maximum impact. This plan was one of the strongest responses to the global recession among the Group of Seven countries. The broad-based business tax reductions are reducing the costs of operating in Canada, making investment here more attractive, thereby encouraging firms to invest more in all sectors of the Canadian economy. This is increasing wages, creating jobs and raising the standard of living for Canadians. Along with our strong fiscal position, the solid banking system, and sound monetary policy, we believe that this approach to encouraging investment is

the best way to improve the productivity of our businesses and indeed the prosperity of all Canadians.

However, we also have been clear. We believe that all Canadians should pay their fair share of taxes and not use loopholes to avoid their taxes. That is why our government has closed over 40 tax loopholes in recent years to improve the fairness and integrity of the tax system. The jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act takes further action on this front by modifying the penalty for making unreported tax shelter sales, to better match the penalty to the purported tax savings of the unreported tax shelter.

We understand that taxpayers willingly and honestly provide a portion of their hard-earned income to fund health care, social programs and other vital services that benefit all Canadians, demanding only in return that governments manage their tax dollars wisely and that their taxes be kept low. For our government, this is a solemn responsibility that we take very seriously. We understand fully that sustaining a voluntary tax system rests on the foundation of tax fairness.

In that context, and as part of the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, I would like to spotlight the improvements that we are making to enhancing transparency and accountability for charities. I think I can speak on behalf of my riding of Portage—Lisgar as one of the highest givers to charities. It is also one of the strongest Conservative ridings in the country, voting with a 76% plurality. It is quite interesting that in a very strong Conservative riding, Conservatives are willing to give back and willing to give to charity. They are not looking to the government and they are not looking to taxpayers to give to charities: they take out of their own pocketbooks. I would challenge socialists and NDPers to do the same thing.

● (2210)

Our government recognizes the invaluable role that charities play in communities across Canada. Canada has one of the largest charitable and non-profit sectors in the world, with more than 160,000 charities and non-profit organizations that help address some of the most daunting challenges that Canada faces.

Tax support for registered charities in Canada is considered to be among the most generous in the world, and that is important because there are so many great charities in Canada that do excellent work and they do that excellent work because of the generosity of Canadians.

Registered charities are exempt from tax on their income and may issue official donation receipts for gifts received. In turn, donors can use those receipts to reduce their taxes by claiming a charitable donation tax credit for individuals or charitable donations tax deduction for corporations.

*Government Orders*

In 2011, federal tax assistance for the charitable sector was nearly \$3 billion. However, when Canadians give their hard-earned dollars to a charity they need to be confident that their donation is being put to good use.

Recently, concerns have been raised that some charities may not be respecting the rules regarding political activities. There have also been calls for greater public transparency related to the political activities of charities, including the extent to which they may be funded by foreign sources. Accordingly, to enhance charities' compliance with the rules with respect to political activities, economic action plan 2012 proposes that the CRA enhance its education and compliance activities with respect to political activities by charities. The plan also proposes to improve transparency by requiring charities to provide more information on their political activities, including the extent to which these are funded by foreign sources.

In addition, the plan proposes that the Income Tax Act be amended to restrict the extent to which charities may fund the political activities of other qualified donors, and again, an important aspect of our charitable donation system. Canadian taxpayers want to ensure that when they are giving these funds that they are not going toward political activity. It also proposes that new sanctions be introduced for charities that exceed the limit on political activities or that fail to provide the Canada Revenue Agency with complete and accurate information with respect to any aspect of their annual return.

These measures will help reassure Canadians that they can give with confidence knowing that donations of their hard-earned dollars are used to support legitimate charities.

Amazingly enough, even *Toronto Star* columnist, Thomas Walkom, who is no friend of our Conservative government, has voiced support for this provision. He said:

When [the] Prime Minister...says charities that engage in too much politicking should be denied tax subsidies, he's right.

There's no good reason why environmental groups that oppose oil pipelines should be able to finance their activities, in part, on the backs of the general taxpayer.

When passed, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act will take action to provide tax relief for numerous health care services, drugs and medical devices. This is good news for Canadians across the country. This will reflect the evolving nature of the health care sector and better meet the health care needs of Canadians.

Specifically, today's legislation before us seeks to exempt from the GST pharmacists' professional services, other than their prescription drug dispensing services, as well as expand the list of medical devices eligible for tax relief under the GST and income tax systems to include blood coagulation monitors.

In my time allotted today I have had the opportunity to touch on just a few of the very important tax measures that are in the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act. I would encourage all members of the House to read the legislation and give it the support it deserves.

• (2215)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to quote an MP, who said the following:

—it has become a standard practice with governments to bring in omnibus legislation following every budget under what we might call the kitchen sink approach....

How can members represent their constituents on these various areas when they are forced to vote in a block on such legislation and on such concerns?

We can agree with some of the measures but oppose others. How do we express our views and the views of our constituents when the matters are so diverse? Dividing the bill into several components would allow members to represent views of their constituents on each of the different components in the bill.

It was, of course, the Prime Minister who said that in 1994, and this is a bigger bill.

My question is about process. Does the member believe in what the Prime Minister said in 1994? How can she get behind a bill like this with the logic of the Prime Minister in 1994, which I agree with, on this approach, which is highly undemocratic?

• (2220)

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner:** Madam Speaker, we are in 2012. We have just come through one of the greatest recessions that our globe has seen. What Canadians have asked our government to do is to continue to implement a successful economic action plan that has gone from implementing stimulus into the economy to, at this point, reducing the deficit, as well as implementing a number of measures that Canadians have been asking us to do.

I have been hearing in my riding, since and I was elected and before that, people say that we should do something to streamline the Fisheries Act. These are measures that Canadians have asked our government to undertake. The opposition is only concerned with delaying. It is criticizing our oil industry and talking about pouring a lot of money into Europe. We are focused on Canada, on growing our economy and on making our country stronger.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, by April 2008, three years after the government came into office and before the recession began, the country was back in deficit, as my hon. colleague may know. By March 31, 2009, the end of that fiscal year, there was a deficit of \$5.8 billion and stimulus spending did not start until later that year. In fact, by June of that year there were articles in which municipalities were complaining that it still had not started.

In view of the fact that the government put us in deficit before the recession began, how much responsibility does she feel her government bears for the cuts that are now resulting?

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner:** Madam Speaker, it is very clear from the results of the last election who Canadians put their trust in when it comes to the economy, stimulating the economy and reducing the deficit. That is our Conservative government.

*Government Orders*

It was very clear that, when the Liberals were in government, their idea of reducing spending was slashing transfers to the provinces. We have done the exact opposite. In fact, we have guaranteed the amount that provinces are receiving, for example, for health care.

We presented a plan to Canadians. Everything that we told Canadians we would do we are doing. Canadians know they can count on this government. When we make a promise, we keep our word. When we campaigned, we met and consulted with Canadians. We said that we had a spending plan that was targeted and temporary. Now we are moving forward, continuing to see jobs, growth and prosperity, but also reducing the deficit. The result is a Conservative majority and the Liberals over there in the third spot.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Madam Speaker, with Bill C-38, when I talk to other members of the House and others who have been around for a while, I feel that we are witnessing a massive transformation of our country as we know it and, unfortunately, it is our future generations who will bear the consequences of these reckless actions today.

We are told that somehow all the budget cuts are necessary in these difficult times. We have the cutting and slashing of the programs that we as Canadians value, and legislation that protects us is also being cut, all this against a backdrop of massive corporate tax cuts.

I would like to remind the members of the House that, between 2006 and 2014, the government will have given over \$220 billion worth of corporate tax cuts to the corporations that do not need this money. We can just think about what \$220 billion could do for our country.

In addition to that, we have had over \$50 billion stolen out of the employment insurance fund. Now, fewer than 60% of those who are eligible receive this money because of the fact that the government wants to make more cuts.

This massive 421-page bill not only contains measures outlined in the budget but also includes many previously unannounced changes. A full one-third of Bill C-38 is dedicated to the gutting of environmental regulations and protection.

In addition, the bill includes a series of previously unannounced measures that will contribute to a less transparent and more secretive environment, including a massive gutting of the powers of the Auditor General.

• (2225)

[*Translation*]

Among other things, this bill raises the eligibility age for old age security and guaranteed income supplement benefits from 65 to 67. It weakens the environmental assessment system and the measures to protect fish habitats, in order to expedite approval of large projects, including pipeline projects.

This bill also repeals the Fair Wages and Hours of Work Act, which will allow employers to circumvent the wage rates set by unions for construction workers hired on projects funded by the federal government.

[*English*]

This is an important point. This was outlined by my colleague, the member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre, who found this one line in the budget that basically guts the rights of construction workers to have contracts that must pay the prevailing wage. Combine that with other recent Conservative legislation that allows contractors to get temporary foreign workers within 10 days, eradicating fair wages and hours from the laws, it is yet another nail in the coffin of Canadian labour rights.

International brokers or, as my colleague from Winnipeg Centre described them, labour pimps, pedal foreign workers from all over the country for construction projects. What does this mean? Soon, all a company will have to do is post an ad in the paper saying that it wants carpenters for \$8 an hour, no overtime and no benefits. In the likely event that nobody applies within 10 days, international labour pimps can be called to provide all the manpower needed at the prevailing provincial minimum wage.

It does not take a lot of imagination to see how such an easy access to cheap labour will drive down construction costs on the backs of Canadian workers in the largest employing industry sector in the country and the trickle down effect this will have on our economy.

I have a few letters that I would like to read into the record that I have received, as all of us have from our constituents. One letter is from Castlegar. A constituent writes:

It therefore is distressing in the extreme to see the Conservative party taken over by a distorted...world view that has more in common with the current state of the Republican Party in the USA than it does with the kind of conservatism practiced over time in Canada. Voter suppression, unlimited power to corporations, the suppression of science and denial of scientific knowledge are not historically Canadian practices....

This is another quote:

I am becoming very disheartened about our country, due to the threats to our democracy...and the potential disasters that could befall our northern coast and rivers if the pipeline is approved.

Please continue fighting this ludicrous project! I spent many years on Haida Gwaii and know the challenges of running boats in those northern waters. Even when things are "normal", large ships can run aground. It has happened already and will happen again....

The whole tar sands development sickens me, knowing the potential of major environmental disasters and the current contamination of northern rivers. What bothers me most is the ignorance of the Alberta and Canadian governments and their general lack of environmental regulation and monitoring...

He and others are concerned about the fact that we are losing environmental oversight so we can go forward with a balanced plan instead of a one-side plan as is currently projected.

This is another quote:

Bill C-38 is a "trojan horse" bill containing much more than just Budget items. It is bad for the environment, bad for Canada's worldwide image, bad for the social safety net that Canadians WANT, bad for fish, water and all living creatures, and it is bad for democracy. Everything that is not a direct Budget item MUST be split off this Bill and debated properly by the appropriate committees, before the Budget Bill itself is presented to Parliament.

Act democratic—split the Bill to permit study and debate.

This is another quote:

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I am concerned about the revision of the Fisheries Act tucked inside the current omnibus bill. I feel these changes threaten the environmental assessment and project implementation process and therefore threaten viable fish habitat throughout Canada. Without viable habitat for fish, interior, coastal and ocean ecosystems will suffer, and so will the economies and cultures that depend on them. I am requesting that you pressure the current government to please reconsider the process under which these changes are being implemented.

I would like to add that this point of view is not only felt by people right across Canada but also by four former cabinet ministers, two of them having served under the Conservative government. They have called the current changes to the Fisheries Act unprecedented and not in the best interest of our country.

The final letter that I have, one of many, says:

The federal budget legislation...puts our land, water and climate at risk by making enormous changes to Canada's environmental laws. It also contains sweeping new powers to limit debate and silence legitimate voices, including those of land owners, First Nations, charities and other Canadians.

I care about nature and democracy, which is why I'm asking you, as my representative in our Parliament, to express my concern about changing Canada's environmental and charitable laws without sufficient public input and Parliamentary debate.

I might add that my party went across the country and we listened to people. We conducted hearings. The overwhelming majority of people who talked to us are saying that something is not right. We should not be supporting this legislation that lumps all of these different pieces of legislation and measures into one act.

I would like to close with part of a speech given by Andrew Nikiforuk in Nelson regarding the tar sands development. These are a couple of quotations from the speech. He says:

The Northern Gateway pipeline will result in 300 to 400 supertankers annually having to negotiate the treacherous waters of BC's northern coastline;

The ships will likely be owned by PetroChina and Sinopec, two companies that are only accountable to the Communist Party of China;

This is where we are sending our raw bitumen if this goes through.

● (2230)

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my hon. colleague's comments about the possible environmental impacts of the budget bill. They are certainly very worrisome.

Would he like to talk about his views in relation to the changes to the old age security program?

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Madam Speaker, I respect my hon. colleague's thoughts and judgment. He is an experienced member of Parliament and he certainly has a point about the old age security.

We have been told that somehow we need to raise the application age to 67 from 65. In fact, studies and responsible people have shown that is not necessary, that we can maintain the level at age 65.

It is quite ironic that at a time when this economic impact is being felt around the world, France is going to actually lower old age security for its citizens, not raising it as we are doing in Canada.

● (2235)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from British Columbia for sharing his insights and also those of his constituents. We come here to represent our constituents. I asked one of the Conservatives earlier for comments on what the Prime Minister had said about representing

constituents when he stood up, when he was opposition leader, and said that this was wrong, that this was anti-democratic. We know that one of the B.C. MPs from the government side tried to do the same and represent his constituents and we know what happened there.

This is about the fundamentals of democracy when we have a bill this size and we are asked as parliamentarians to go over it and assure our constituents that we have done everything we can do with due diligence. I would like the member's comments as to what he thinks this is doing to our parliamentary democracy, to representative democracy, and what it is doing to the role of the MP as we ensure we are representing our constituents. What does this bill do to that job?

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Ottawa for his very pertinent and wise comments. To answer his question in a nutshell, this is making a mockery of the parliamentary process. This bill is making a mockery of the democratic process, in spite of what those people over there say. They take so much legislation, ram it into over 400 pages of a budget bill then we are told to vote on it and if we do not vote for it, we are somehow not acting in the best interests of Canada. The bill should be split. There should be a discussion on each of the important aspects. Democracy is about that. This is not democracy and we are losing that.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Madam Speaker, what does my colleague think about the fact that the government members talk with such pride about what is in this bill, yet they are not letting Canadians take the time to understand exactly what they are doing with those 70 pieces of legislative change that are being proposed in the bill? What does that say about how proud the Conservatives are of what they are doing?

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Madam Speaker, my immediate reaction is that the Conservatives are not very proud of what they are doing. Otherwise, they would allot time for this.

As I mentioned earlier, when we have four former cabinet ministers, two of the them in the Progressive Conservative Party, who are asking what the Conservatives are doing in the whole area of the Fisheries Act, then something is wrong. These people should be appearing before committees and explaining their view. This should be taken right across the country. None of this is happening and this is totally undemocratic and a threat to our parliamentary system.

**Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am proud to be here to speak in favour of Bill C-38. As I do, I reflect on much of the debate that has gone on, not just tonight, but the constant hours and hours of debate that have gone on in the finance committee. The amount of time that has been allocated to the bill and is still yet to come is unprecedented.

I find as I listen to colleagues opposite, while I have great regard for them, I hear more questions about the process than I do about actual questions about the budget. Therefore, it strikes me that while at one point there is a lot of broad talk about the importance of being able to ensure that we spend more time talking about the budget, it feels more like talking about talking. That is the concern I have.

*Government Orders*

Members in the House have heard me say in the past a great comment that my Cape Breton mom used to say, "After it's all said and done, there's a lot more said than done". I really feel in some respects that this is what we have as this circle goes around and around.

In my city of London, in my riding of London West, people are concerned about their families and the economy. I get comments about how the Conservatives have handled that relatively well in the worst recession in all of our lifetimes, not just in the House, but Canadians throughout the country. We weathered that with high marks. We have created some 750,000 jobs, most of them full-time since that time as well. That is positive. We have the strongest financial institutions in the world. We are the envy of the G20 countries.

It would be great if I could ask members opposite to come forward and say that they are proud of this as well because there are some things that we do that we can take pride in as a country. We have those opportunities. There are rare times when members come together in solidarity and say "This is something that matters to us". We respect the importance of Canadian workers, the people who are trying to do the best they can for their families.

There is a greater optimism now than there has been in some time. There are a lot of countries in the world, tragically, that we are glad we are not there because their tragedy and their stories are very suspect. I think their futures are much more bleak than Canada. I have great optimism for Canada, so I would invite members opposite to share some of that optimism.

I have some formal comments I would like to make because I think that is all part of this process as we try to get into some of the specifics of it.

The bill in front of us, Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, is intended to bring into force significant measures that we have introduced to ensure the long-term strength and sustainability of Canada's economy and its finances. Despite what others would say, these are measures that are decisive, effective and above all, fair.

It is said that if one wants to anticipate how one acts in the future, then look how they have acted in the past. I am exceptionally pleased and proud of how the government has respected our seniors. One just has to look at some of the incredibly positive benefits the government has provided seniors since coming to government, all to make the point that there is no greater respect than honouring those who have built our country and given us the many opportunities that all of us enjoy today.

I am honoured that our government introduced, then doubled the pension income credits for seniors to \$2,000. The most dramatic benefit for married seniors has come in the form of pension income splitting, allowing Canadian seniors who receive qualifying pension income to allocate to their spouse, or common law partner with whom they reside, up to one-half of that income. That is phenomenal.

The government increased the age limit for converting RRSPs to RIFs. The tax-free savings account, or TFSA, is one of the most tax-effective and novel ways for seniors, in fact for all Canadians, to

benefit. Canadians currently benefit from a retirement income system that is recognized around the world as a model that succeeds in helping Canadian seniors and we want to keep it that way for future generations.

That is why this bill, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, would ensure that it remains that way now and, frankly, for generations to come. We took action in this regard because quite simply, the old age security program was designed for a different time.

Let me give some background. Most members of the House will realize this and some will have to read it in the history books because they are a little younger than others. However, we have very bright young members who would get this. In the 1970s there were seven workers for every one person over the age of 65. In 20 years, there will only be two.

● (2240)

In 1970, life expectancy was age 69 for men and age 76 for women. Today, it is age 79 for men and age 83 for women. At the same time, Canada's birth rate is falling.

The good news about these statistics, though, is that Canadians are living longer and healthier lives, but there are fewer workers to take their place when they retire.

Here is the reality: Canada has changed. Therefore, old age security must change with it if it is to serve the purpose for which it was intended while remaining sustainable and reflecting evolving demographic realities.

If we were to remain complacent in the face of these developments, it would be financially unworkable in the long term. The cost of the OAS program is scheduled to rise from \$38 billion in 2011 to \$108 billion in 2030. Clearly that is not sustainable, and not acting for Canadian taxpayers who expect this benefit when they retire would be economically irresponsible. In a caring country committed to its people, the government has an obligation to balance care and cost.

It is important for members of this House to realize that the OAS program is already the single largest program of the Government of Canada.

A recent *National Post* editorial stated:

Unlike the CPP, OAS is funded out of general government revenues, and will eat up more and more tax dollars as Baby Boomers enter their senior years.... That is not something that we can afford to ignore.

I would just challenge members. If they have never read the book *Boom, Bust & Echo*, which talks about the demographic reality, the changes that are coming through, such that the baby boomer generation is the one that is going to create the greatest demands on our social system, I would encourage them to read it just to give them some of the background. I think it would help all of us to understand better.

*Government Orders*

With the passage of Canada's jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, the age of eligibility for OAS and the GIS would be gradually increased from the age of 65 to the age of 67, starting in April 2023, with full implementation by January 2029. It is intended in that way to give the gentlest implementation and give a lot of advance notice for people to be able to plan and prepare. This change would not affect anyone who is 54 years of age or older as of March 21, 2012. I feel it is a responsible and measured approach for taxpayers, particularly with those who have an expectation of these benefits and who expect and deserve no less.

To improve flexibility and choice for those wishing to work longer, our government will also allow for the voluntary deferral of the OAS for up to five years, starting July 1, 2013. This would provide the option for people to defer take-up on the OAS to a later time and receive a higher annual actuarially-adjusted pension as a result. The adjusted pension would be calculated on an actuarially neutral basis, as is done with the Canada pension plan.

This would mean that on average, individuals would receive the same lifetime OAS, whether they choose to take it up at the earliest stage of eligibility or defer it to a later year. The annual pension would be higher if they choose to defer. GIS benefits, which provide additional support to the lowest-income seniors, will not be eligible for actuarial adjustment.

These sorts of changes are in keeping with international best practices, as many OECD member countries have recently planned or are announcing increases to the eligibility ages for their public pensions and social security programs, including—and this is a long list—Australia, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

However, these are not the only areas where Bill C-38 would implement improvements to OAS.

The bill would also improve the way we administer OAS for Canada's seniors, while at the same time generating operational savings. The act would do so by putting in place a proactive enrolment regime that would eliminate the need for many seniors to apply for OAS and GIS. This measure would reduce the burden on seniors of completing application processes and it would reduce the government's administrative costs. What a boon that is going to be to seniors.

With the passage Bill C-38, proactive enrolment will be implemented under a phased-in approach from 2013 to 2016.

● (2245)

It is interesting that Gordon Pape, the noted financial columnist, also applauded this move, calling it:

...a welcome elimination of bureaucratic red tape that should have the effect of putting a lot more money into the hands of seniors.... This means that many people will no longer have to apply for benefits when they turn 65 – the payments will come automatically. The potential gain for seniors is huge.

The federal government's task force on financial literacy reported that an estimated 160,000 seniors who qualify for old age security are not receiving benefits because they have not submitted a formal

application. The loss in pre-tax income to these people is almost \$1 billion.

However, the changes that simplify—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I regret the hon. member's time has elapsed. Perhaps he can complete it with questions and comments.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member is often noted for being reasonable, so I ask, when looking at such a bill as this budget implementation bill—or, as it has been called, the Trojan Horse bill—which contains changes to 70 pieces of legislation, would the member not agree that it would at least be reasonable to separate those pieces of legislation so that they could go into the appropriate committees to get the proper review and expertise?

This is obviously something that we as the official opposition had proposed as reasonable for an omnibus bill that is so huge and so far-reaching in its changes. Would the member not agree that it is reasonable to request that the bill be studied at committees that have the appropriate expertise to look at and comment on these changes?

● (2250)

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Madam Speaker, as I think about the question, it reminds me a bit of the situation when the Minister of Justice put forward the Safe Streets and Communities Act. It was a compilation of some eight different bills.

At that time, members opposite said that if we broke this down into individual bills, perhaps they might be able to support some of these things. Here is the challenge: every one of those bills had gone in front of Parliament and every one of them was rejected by the opposition.

Therefore, it strikes me that while perhaps it is a noble thought at one level, I frankly do not believe that the result would be any different from what it is today. Every aspect of the bill that is in place relates to financial issues, and I think it really does show a very clear path of where the government is going.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague across the way.

I would like to be clear also. The government's raising of the age of eligibility from 65 to 67 years is not necessary and is not needed to maintain the sustainability of the old age security.

Experts from the OECD, leading universities and the government itself have all said that our OAS program does not face major challenges and that there is no pressing need for change. Canada's Parliamentary Budget Officer says that the OAS is sustainable. Payments today cost 2.4% of our national GDP; when the baby boomers max out in 2031, it will climb to 3.1% and then drop off again.

Why is the government refusing to listen to its own experts and creating a false crisis?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from Etobicoke North for posing that question. I think it is an important question, and let me explain why.

I explained in my comments earlier that the CPP is funded through employer and employee contributions. It is through that process that we come up with the funding that is available. However, the funds that are available to support OAS and GIS come from general tax revenues. In other words, there is no magic base of premium incomes to do that.

As I indicated, in 20 years the costs will go from \$38 billion to \$108 billion of taxpayer money, so with a modest, slight adjustment—and we are asking for a modest accommodation from folks who will eventually get to that senior group—we are going to ensure that we sustain a program for people's retirement that will allow them to live in dignity and that will show respect to them. That adjustment is the key to that outcome.

I would hope that members opposite appreciate that when prices triple in such a very short period of time, it is just a demographic issue. Again, I will reintroduce the name of that book, *Boom, Bust & Echo*, for their consideration as well.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, an auto analyst once said that the future of the auto industry is the six inches between our ears. It is our ability to innovate and think long range. That is a key pillar of our budget and the necessary architecture to implement it.

Can the member talk about innovation and how it is going to drive long-term economic prosperity?

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. In my former life, when I was in the insurance business and specifically in employee benefits and pensions, one of my dear colleagues once said that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We have a circumstance with the government where, frankly, we are allowed to be a little hopeful that our economy is getting stronger in a world where the economy has some great challenges worldwide. We can be proud of that, and innovation has a very direct impact on that. We will see that the government's commitment to innovation across various departments will help sustain us as we go forward.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, right off the top I would like to address the conflict and divisiveness that is being created at this very moment when households across this country have to choose between watching the awarding of the Stanley Cup or listening to the comments presented by the member for Cape Breton—Canso.

Congratulations to Darryl Sutter and Dustin Brown, captain of the L.A. Kings. I heard second-hand that they ended up beating New Jersey tonight, so congratulations to the 18 Canadians on that team. Way to go.

There are any number of issues that I could address during this budget discussion. One is certainly the cuts to ACOA of \$19 million over the coming years.

There are the cuts to the regional development authorities, groups that have done so much for their various communities and contributed in many different ways to programs and projects over the years. They are being cut.

We are seeing regional offices of Veterans Affairs being shut down in Sydney and Charlottetown and being centralized. If we owe anything to anybody, it is the veterans of this nation. We at least owe them the courtesy of being able to meet with a live person to discuss their files and current challenges. That is being taken away from them through the measures within this budget.

I could talk about the OAS and how the changes to the OAS in this budget are going to disproportionately impact the poorest in our country: disabled persons and persons who live close to the poverty line. It is not only those who live in poverty, but those with low-income households and single mothers. Those who most need that support will be the ones most impacted by these changes to the OAS. I could talk about that, but I am going to limit my comments to five letters. The first three letters will be DFO and the last two letters will be EI.

My riding of Cape Breton—Canso is a coastal community, and it has been seized by both of these issues. I heard a government member say the Conservatives have done what they said they were going to do and the government has delivered what it said it was going to deliver. I know that in 2008 they identified in their platform that they were going to bring forward a new Fisheries Act in 2008. They are in a majority position now and pretty much ram through whatever they want. This piece of legislation is its marquee case in point.

They could have brought forward a Fisheries Act, but instead lumped all of this stuff together—the environment, natural resources, the fisheries. Changes to the application of the Fisheries Act are going to be felt in fishing communities right across this country, and not only by coastal communities but by communities on inland waters as well.

A couple of the changes to DFO are certainly cause for alarm when we look at what the Conservatives have done with the science branches and science within DFO. Regardless of the species, we know that the health of the stocks, the biomass and the exploitation rate are generated and driven by pure science. If the Conservatives do not have access to the science, the health of our sustainable fishery will be put in question going forward. That is something we should all be very concerned about.

With regard to enforcement, we know that front-line officers are being taken out of regional offices. I spoke with my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour about something we were made aware of last week, the change in policy whereby DFO is no longer going to require lobster fishermen to buy tags because there is nobody in the offices to sell and administer them. The government is going to stop the practice of selling tags. The lobster traps are not going to be tagged, yet what the lobster fishermen have done over the last generations is put in place conservation practices that have sustained that fishery and those communities by having that fishery.

*Government Orders*

● (2255)

One thing that has been a key component of those conservation methods is a limited number of traps per fisherman. When the fisheries officers do pull a trap, if they are not marked, how would they know who owns that trap? That is an obvious step backward in conservation in what should be a move toward further sustainability in those fisheries. We have seen that.

The most egregious one that really gets the hackles up on anybody is this. I have a great number of friends who are progressive Conservatives. They are good people and they want to see people succeed and prosper. St. John's, Newfoundland, long before oil and gas, was the hub of finance for the Atlantic coast fishery. That is where people came and did their trade. Fish were bought and sold. Certainly, DFO has a long history and long presence in St. John's, Newfoundland. The government is taking 28 jobs out of St. John's, Newfoundland, and moving them to Fredericton, New Brunswick, which is the only constituency in Atlantic Canada that does not have a wharf. Coincidentally though, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is from Fredericton, New Brunswick. I am sure there are Reformers over on that bench who, when they heard that, wanted to take a shower. That was so cheap and tawdry that the Conservatives should apologize to the good people of Newfoundland for taking on such an activity. They should be embarrassed. I hope that the Reformers in that caucus would address that particular move.

If Loyola Hearn were in this House, that would not happen. Those jobs would still be in St. John's, Newfoundland. Loyola Hearn would not let that happen. I guess it is a penalty for not electing Loyola Sullivan.

The other two letters are EI. We know that the changes to this EI system are nothing short of an attack on rural Canada, on seasonal industries. What they are doing is robbing a group of industries. Seasonal industries contribute about 26% of the GDP of this country. That is seasonal industries, such as tourism, forestry, the fishery, contractors and construction workers. It is about 26% of the GDP. What these measures under this bill would do is rob those industries of a pool of labour going forward. I will just typify this.

We all have landscapers in our communities. Fifteen years ago, anybody with a half-ton truck and wheelbarrow was a landscaper. That industry has come so far now that they have red seal approval, so they have attracted people and professionals to the industry and we see that in the projects they create and the job they do. It is a very professional organization. They know that these changes would steer people into other professions that will steer them away from landscaping. This is just one small seasonal industry. Even more so than the workers who would be chased out of rural communities, it is the industries and the communities that are driven by these industries that would pay the price for the changes in the EI system.

They made a couple of good changes. Had this been a smaller bill or legislation coming forward and if they had debated the EI changes in this House, I think we could have done something to make it better for all Canadians.

I look forward to any questions.

● (2300)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated my colleague's very entertaining speech at this late hour.

The Conservatives are talking about natural resources, but they need to expand their definition of that term, and I think my colleague could enlighten them with his wise remarks in that regard. Indeed, natural resources are not just minerals, oil and natural gas, but they also include our forests, our lakes and our fish. Natural resources include more than what the government would have Canadians believe, that is, just oil, gas and minerals. They also include Canada's nature and our environment. I wonder if my colleague could enlighten this government as to what a natural resource is.

● (2305)

[*English*]

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, the member made a valid point.

It was interesting to note that when the Minister of Finance appeared at the finance committee and he was asked about the components that apply to natural resources, he said it was not his responsibility. In defending the budget, the Minister of Finance was not able to respond to components of the budget that were included in the omnibus budget because they were not within his purview.

My colleague addressed one of the major concerns that has been identified throughout this debate this evening, and that is that there has just been so much rammed into the budget. This could have been eight different bills and they still would have been big bills to deal with.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to give my hon. friend some data. In 2008 the climate change performance index ranked Canada 56th of 57 countries in terms of tackling emissions. In 2009 the Conference Board of Canada ranked Canada 15th of 17 wealthy industrialized nations on environmental performance. I could give 2010 and 2011 data that is similar.

The hon. Thomas Sidden has repeatedly voiced concerns regarding Bill C-38. He said the government is totally watering down and emasculating the Fisheries Act. The government is making Swiss cheese out of it.

I am wondering if the hon. member could comment on the Conservatives' repeated failing grade on the environment.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, one thing I can say with great certainty is that is the first time I have ever been asked a question by somebody who won a Nobel Prize. It is very similar to the question that has been asked by my NDP colleague.

If one can throw enough in, if one can slough enough off, then one does not have to answer the tough questions. One does not have to get into any kind of detail. One views the issues from 36,000 feet. If one lumps enough in, that is going to be the end result. That is what we are seeing in this case.



*Government Orders*

Whether we want to talk about the fishery or the environment, the state of the water or the state of our oceans, they are all connected to the health of the resource. As they are masked inside this legislation, it does all of those sectors a great disservice.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know how much is in this bill. Up to 70 bills would be changed by this omnibus bill. It would change the face of the country.

The hon. member spoke about the effects on the Fisheries Act. I am wondering if he could briefly talk about the kind of consultation that happened either in his riding or in Atlantic Canada or even across the country on the specific changes to section 35, which is fundamental to the protection of fish habitat, which is the trigger for environmental reviews.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I spent some time together on the fisheries and oceans committee. He knows that would have been the place for any changes in the fishery.

The Conservatives had said in 2008 that they wanted to bring forward a new fisheries act. When my colleague from Halifax was Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, he was charged with the same responsibility. Now that there is a majority government, this would be the time to do that, bring it to the fisheries committee and deal with those issues, but in a budget bill? No, we are hurting the people it impacts most.

• (2310)

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a privilege to speak with respect to the bill. I think it is important to note that it strikes the right balance with respect to supporting economic growth, job creation, restoring the balance and returning to a deficit reduction plan that would bring us to balance over a number of years.

The economic action plan is really a number of strategies, a number of steps that, taken together, would accomplish a couple of things. First, they would ensure that our economy continues to expand and jobs are preserved and continue to grow.

It is an opportunity for Canadians to enjoy economic prosperity at a time when the economies of the world are experiencing significant pressures and challenges.

The delay tactics on the part of the opposition, the rhetoric, the steps to try to delete all the clauses, are really not improving the legislation; rather they are just tactics to delay for the sake of delaying.

In addition to growing jobs, we can continue to grow our economy by ensuring a number of projects, mining projects, oil and gas recovery programs and indeed responsible resource development take place. When that happens, of course jobs are created and people have the opportunity to advance in their skills and training and to enjoy the economy that follows from that.

Many in the resource sector, including the Saskatchewan Mining Association and others, have concerns regarding the regulatory process for approval of new projects. If a project is delayed because of the regulatory process, needless to say there would be fewer jobs. Streamlining the process would speed up the process, eliminate duplication that results in a lot of time being consumed and of course

a lot of money being spent. Overlapping between the provincial and the federal processes has cost both time and money.

Part 3 of the budget 2012 deals exclusively with responsible resource development and the government's plan to modernize Canada's regulatory system. The measures would make regulatory reviews for major projects more predictable and timely. It would reduce the regulatory burden, the duplication, while at the same time strengthening environmental protection.

Time limits are set for assessments. Co-operation with jurisdictions would be enabled through powers to delegate an environmental assessment, or part of it, the substitution of the process, to another jurisdiction or recognition of a provincial process as equivalent for a specific project.

Emerging markets around the world have provided Canada with a tremendous opportunity to responsibly develop our abundant natural resources for the benefit of all Canadians. Much of it is in the northern part of Canada. It is where we find many aboriginal people reside and where they need the employment, the skills training and upgrading.

In 2010 natural resource sectors employed more than 760,000 workers in communities throughout the country. In the next 10 years, more than 500 major economic projects representing over \$500 billion in new investments are planned right across Canada. Fixed timelines would create certainty and predictability for business, which would lead to good, well-paying and skilled jobs for Canadians.

In order to ensure our economy continues to grow, we have to be sure we have the human resources. In my travels with the human resource committee, we found that there are labour shortages in high-demand occupations across the country in the skilled trades as well as labour shortages in the lower-skilled positions, especially in the service industry, the food industry, the hotel and hospitality industry, in agriculture and aquaculture as well.

We need not only to increase the opportunities to develop our resources but also to ensure that we have the right human resources to meet the national demands of industry.

We have found in all regions of the country, Halifax, St. John's, Sydney, Vancouver, Fort McMurray and my home town of Estevan as well as Weyburn and other areas in Souris—Moose Mountain, that business is finding it difficult to meet their labour needs.

We can all agree that to the extent possible we need to ensure we start early in our schools to emphasize the skills and trades to our youth, to use the regional community colleges to adapt to industry and in partnership with industry, to do the proper programming and training to provide the individuals needed for the job.

*Government Orders*

• (2315)

There are other additional steps that can be taken, and this budget document does that. First, we have taken steps to improve the employment insurance program. It is one of the single largest labour market programs that we have, providing income replacement to help individuals and their families, as well as training and other labour market supports to help Canadians return to employment. By agreement with the provinces, \$1.9 billion would be spent on skills training and upgrading to ensure that Canadians have the skills they need to advance in their positions and to have the jobs that are available. The budget has targeted common sense changes to the EI program to make it more efficient, a program that will promote job creation, remove disincentives to work, support unemployed Canadians and quickly connect Canadians to jobs.

If people are able to improve themselves by finding a job that provides more income than what they can receive on EI, that is, 90% of what they used to make, and is in line with their skills and abilities, then of course they should be able to take that particular job. It may be that if they advance they do not go back to their old job, but that is the nature of how the economy works.

Economic action plan 2012 also proposes \$21 million over two years to connect unemployed Canadians with jobs. Matching workers with available jobs is critical to supporting economic growth and productivity. So if money is going to be spent on good labour market information, if we can provide information on what jobs are available and people are able to access them, everybody would win in that situation: the employer, the economy and the worker. The steps taken here certainly aim to ensure that the content and timeliness of job and labour market information provided to Canadians searching for work is up to date, informational and available to them.

Additionally, the steps would ensure that if people do take a job, they would be able to retain their working wage in addition to their EI to a greater extent than before. What this would do is ensure that those who wish to work can work.

Notwithstanding all of that, we find that with the economy going forward as it is, as a result of the steps we have taken in numerous budgets, people are drawn to higher-paying jobs in the mining industry or government sector and are upwardly mobile. That is a good thing.

Employers in the service industry, including in the fast food and hospitality industries, find they have a difficult time getting employees. So we have enhanced the temporary foreign worker program. We have taken steps in this budget to ensure that the process would be more efficient with less paperwork and be more responsive to employers so they can fill those needs. If businesses and communities want to grow, they expect the service industry to be in step with them. This budget would provide the ability to do that.

In addition, notwithstanding anything that is done, notwithstanding the improvements to the EI system and all of the other processes that try to ensure that our labour needs are met within the country, there are certain skill sets that are not met and must be met by immigration. Steps would be taken in this budget to ensure that immigration is streamlined and flexible and that we can get the

skilled people that this country needs to grow, as quickly as possible. Any step we can take in that regard is a positive one. We would get the best skilled people who are out there to meet our demands.

In addition, we would take steps to deal with foreign credentials. When those people come to our country, it takes time to have their credentials recognized. We would enhance our programming and our funding to ensure that people in certain categories can have their credentials assessed within one year. We have expanded those categories twice now and would do so again under this particular budget to ensure that the process can happen quickly. We would ensure that there would be funding or loans provided to people so that they could enhance their skills quickly. Everybody would win by that. They would win by having a better job with higher pay, and we would win by the fact that they would be able to provide a service.

• (2320)

All of these steps are to be taken together and are strategic to ensure that our economy continues to go forward and work well, notwithstanding what is happening in the rest of the world. These are all positive actions. We should get behind them and support them.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's speech. He mentioned that within the environmental assessment laws, which are to be gutted and mangled by this bill, there would be provisions for the transfer of environmental assessments to provincial regimes where equivalency is available.

In this world of environmental assessment where there are ever increasing projects and lesser land, air and water available, one of the most critical issues within an environmental assessment is cumulative impact assessment, namely how to assess projects in relation to other projects in similar regions.

I know that the legislation the government has brought forward still contains cumulative impact assessments. However, interestingly enough, there is only one province that has this within its purview. Therefore, equivalency in environmental assessment in this country for some of the more critical issues is really not very strong between what exists in the provinces and what is required under federal legislation.

Does my colleague think that in Ontario, which lacks cumulative impact assessment, projects conducted under its provincial legislation rather than federal legislation would be invalid?

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, the point the member is missing is the aim of ensuring there is no duplication, that there is no repetition of the same thing over a long period of time, with a number of people trying to get to the same conclusion. The bill would ensure that there is a proper assessment done and that it is done at one level. In order for a province to have an equivalency agreement, it would have to meet certain standards. Of course, if there are no such standards in the province, then they would proceed with the federal standards.

*Government Orders*

Industry has complained about the slowness of the process and the fact that it is overlapping, dealing with the same issues in two jurisdictions between federal and provincial processes. That has cost industry a lot of time, money and delays in projects for no particular good outcome. The bill would streamline that process, but not by way of compromising the end result; it would ensure that the end result is every bit as good, and better.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the subcommittee hearings reviewing part 3 of Bill C-38, Ms. Rachel Forbes, staff counsel for West Coast Environmental Law, said that she did not believe that the proposed amendments and the new legislation as currently drafted would accomplish any of the government's four pillars—namely, more predictable and timely reviews, less duplication in reviewing projects, strong environmental protection, and enhanced consultation with aboriginal peoples—but might actually hinder them.

My question is, what are the projected costs of the repeal of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to the provinces and territories?

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, at this instant I cannot provide the projected costs or savings, because I am not aware of them. However, I know that people who have testified before our committee, many of them in the chemical industry in Saskatchewan and others who are planning to do extensions to projects and so on, have found that project delays and the cost associated with those have happened for no better reason than duplication and the process involved.

Notwithstanding what that particular witness may have said, there are other witnesses who take a much different position. The Saskatchewan Mining Association has appeared at a number of committees, including recently in Estevan, Saskatchewan during a hearing, where it said that this needed to be addressed if we wanted to be sure that we proceeded with our economy while at the same time protecting the environment. The cost of not doing so would run into the millions of dollars, and the loss of many jobs and the continued economic prosperity of Canadians.

• (2325)

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to get up and speak for a few moments this evening about this important piece of legislation.

I am somewhat confused by the responses of the members opposite when they say a couple of things. They say that this is common sense way to deal with a number of problems, by introducing an omnibus bill that changes 70 important pieces of legislation; it is a common sense approach to dealing with important matters; it is simply a way of growing the economy, creating jobs and moving the country forward; and that a lot of the changes they have introduced in the legislation are important changes that will benefit the country, and that they are very proud of them.

What I cannot get over is, if that in fact is the case, then why do they not take some time to consider each one of those changes? For example, when we look at the changes to the employment insurance system contained in the bill, none other than the four Atlantic premiers have come out in the last few days and said they have very

serious concerns about the proposed changes. They have not been consulted and would like to examine those changes.

We have talked a lot in the House over the past number of weeks about the changes to the Fisheries Act. Contrary to what one member opposite said, many of us have looked at the bill, examined the changes that have been made and have listened to a number of experts who have considered what the impact will be. As recently as this afternoon, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission came before our fisheries committee to talk about invasive species. They spoke to a resolution that had been passed and forwarded to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans by the advisory committee to that commission, asking that the government engage in further consultation on the changes to the Fisheries Act, and failing that, that the government recognizes that the definition of fisheries habitat it has used is completely and utterly inadequate. They suggested different language in order to do that.

That does not sound to me as if the people who are affected by the legislation are understanding or being supportive of these changes. Therefore, what is confusing me and confusing many Canadians who are being directly affected by the legislation is that if government members are as proud as they say they are about the changes they are trying to implement, why do they not take time to talk with Canadians about what they are proposing to do and make sure that everyone is on board?

Unfortunately, what we have seen over the past number of weeks is the government hell bent on getting the legislation through. It is trying to prevent Canadians actually seeing what is in the bill and understanding what is here.

The member before me spoke glowingly about the changes to EI, the changes to the temporary foreign workers program, and the changes to the Fair Wages and Hours Act and how this was going to help employees. What they are doing with those three changes alone is driving down the wages of working people in our country so they will not be able to afford to purchase goods and services in our communities. How in the name of heaven is that supporting the economy in Atlantic Canada or in the member's own constituency? I would like him to give that some consideration.

I was on the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Finance that considered Bill C-38, the 70 pieces of legislation that were being affected, and we had only 14 hours to do that.

• (2330)

We had 14 hours to consider the employment insurance changes and the Fisheries Act changes. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act would be completely repealed and replaced in Bill C-38. We had 14 hours to examine and to listen to representations by Canadian experts, by people who would be directly affected by this legislation. These people came before us and told us what they thought about it. They told us how the bill would affect them and the issues that they are interested in. They brought their expertise before us. It was revealing. I learned a great deal from both those who supported the legislation and those who were opposed to the legislation.

*Government Orders*

However, what concerned me the most, as a parliamentarian and as someone who has some experience in legislation, in dealing with these matters, was the dismissive way that many of these witnesses were dealt with. I was disgusted, frankly. Members opposite, members of the government side, challenged anyone who raised any questions. They treated them poorly. In fact, if we look at the subcommittee's report that was tabled in this House when the finance committee reported back to this House, we will see a report that is nowhere near reflective of the testimony that we heard in those 14 hours.

Let me give an example. The Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Chief Atleo, came before our committee. He told us in no uncertain terms how upset he and his people were. They had not been consulted, the government had completely ignored the duty to accommodate and the duty to consult that has been reaffirmed in Supreme Court decisions over the past 20 years. The changes being proposed in a number of pieces of legislation do not consider the role that the first nations play in this country. It would create extraordinary hardship and extraordinary damage to many of the things that the first nations people in this country hold dear.

Do members see that sentiment reflected in the subcommittee's report? Not a word. Grand Chief Atleo's testimony is not even referred to once in the subcommittee's report. How can that be? We are talking about the Assembly of First Nations that represents over 600 first nations communities in this country, first nations that have rights, treaty rights, constitutional rights that have been defined by and confirmed by the Supreme Court. His testimony and the concerns of the first nations people in this country are not even reflected once in that report.

Members opposite are laughing. They think this is a great joke. But let me say that as a member of this chamber, I am thoroughly embarrassed and disgusted with the way that this matter has been handled. It is so disrespectful of the people who have taken their time to come before us to provide testimony. It is as though, if anyone disagrees with the current government, whether it is a member of the National Round Table on the Environment and on the Economy, or Grand Chief Shawn Atleo or members who came before us today of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, or anyone who has any objection with the government, the members will shout them down, they will rule them out, they will not include them in their reports. It is shameful behaviour. I am telling members that Canadians are paying attention and they are not going to stand for this. They are not going to stand being railroaded by the government.

● (2335)

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite spoke about the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. I had the opportunity to be with the environment critic for the NDP on a television panel earlier this month. When asked by the host if she could name a report that she has used or found useful from the national round table that did not involve a carbon tax, she could not name one. Could my colleague opposite do so?

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Mr. Speaker, the member who asked the question clearly did not pay any attention to what I spent 10 minutes talking about, nor did she spend a whole lot of time paying attention

to the representations in the subcommittee. In fact, when anybody was at all critical of her government, the member went out of her way to abuse and disrespect people who made representations. Frankly, she performed in a manner that is below contempt, as far as I am concerned, for a member of Parliament. I was completely and utterly discouraged and disgusted by that behaviour.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will give my colleague an opportunity to further elaborate on a question he asked today in the House with regard to a very important measure that looks like it is going to be taken away from lobster fishermen, in the Atlantic region at least. A group of fishermen has sacrificed over the last number of years to make sure their industry is sustainable. Now the minister is blowing the whole thing up. I know he is looking at doing away with fleet separation and owner operators, the principles of the fishery that have long served it. It looks like this is another measure, but in the process is destabilizing the conservation and long-term stability of the fishery. I would like my colleague to comment on the question he asked today and the significance of this measure being taken by the government.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. We are dealing with changes to the Fisheries Act in Bill C-38 that would have a very detrimental impact. At the same time, people in the fishery are also being hit as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans makes serious cuts. The latest one we have learned about is that the department is no longer going to issue tags for lobster traps. Therefore, there will be no way to keep track of whether people are fishing legally or illegally. This will fly in the face of all the conservation efforts and attempts to control that the fishermen have been engaged in for so many years.

Let me say in conclusion that his colleague, the member for Etobicoke North, sat with me and colleagues on this side night after night as we listened to representations in the subcommittee. I know that she has as many concerns as I do with the way those witnesses were being dealt with.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we heard the parliamentary secretary talk about the national round table. I wonder if he could comment on Bob Mills, the former Conservative environment critic, who had very critical things to say about shutting down the round table. What does the member think of the Conservative's comment about the Conservatives' budget being rammed through and killing the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy?

● (2340)

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. It was not just Bob Mills but former fisheries ministers John Fraser and Tom Siddon who both said what the government was doing was completely and utterly wrong-headed, that it was trying to hide the changes from Canadians and it needed to back off and put this matter under proper review to make sure we come out at the end of the day not only with a good product but a product that people understand and have some confidence in.

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak tonight about the opposition's intransigence with respect to the passage of Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, and to speak against the opposition's attempts to delay and defeat this important economic legislation.

*Government Orders*

The NDP and its opposition cohorts are engaging in all sorts of games to hijack this important piece of legislation. In response, I would like to remind them that Canadians do not care for procedural games. They want their elected representatives focused on what matters to them: jobs and the economy. This is especially true in a period of such volatile global economic turbulence.

Unfortunately it does not seem that the NDP and the other opposition parties are willing to do that. Canadians are noticing and they are shaking their heads. For the benefit of the NDP, let me quote a recent *Toronto Sun* editorial. I am going to quote extensively.

As Europe stands poised on the brink of a disastrous economic wildfire that could blacken the world, the [NDP leader's] hypocrisy and self-obsession is in full flame... vowing to delay the passing of [economic action plan 2012] by playing silly...with amendments and procedure....This is nothing but grandstanding....This is a budget designed to create jobs and inspire economic growth, and it comes to the House of Commons at a moment that can only be described as the 11th hour of a global economic conflagration....Right now, there is only one enemy in our fight to protect Canada from the repercussions of Europe's burning. And it's...[the NDP leader]. This is inarguable.

The quote describes the NDP as the enemy of our efforts to protect Canada and protect our economy. I could not agree more. Why? Because I understand that Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, is in the best interests of all Canadians. By implementing key elements of economic action plan 2012, this bill would equip Canadians, regardless of whether they are workers, business owners or retirees, with the tools that they need to address the challenges that lie ahead, and to succeed for the long term.

It would include measures that would leverage the enormous economic potential of Canada's increasingly important energy and natural resources sectors. Natural resources, including energy, mining and minerals, processing and forestry, already represent almost 10% of our economy, and provide nearly 800,000 Canadians with employment and income.

My riding of Wild Rose is extremely diverse. It is home to people from all walks of life, engaged in practically every sector of our economy, all striving to build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities, whether they are working in agriculture, tourism, forestry, oil and gas, or the manufacturing and service industries that rely on those sectors' products. They rely on responsible development of the natural resources that we are blessed to share.

From growing up and working on the family farm near Olds, I know how important it is to be a good steward of our environment. It does not matter if one is driving a combine near Didsbury, checking a gas well near Cochrane or running a bed and breakfast in Banff, people make their living directly from the environment. There is a vested interest in making sure their children and grandchildren have the same opportunity.

I am proud to support our government's plan for responsible resource development that is within the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act. Through this act, we would be able to streamline the review process for these types of projects while protecting the environment under an effective and efficient regime based on the principle of one project, one review, and within a clearly defined time period. In the past, these delays could kill potential jobs and stall economic growth by putting valuable investments at risk.

We would also be adopting strong new measures to protect the environment, including making environmental impact decisions enforceable with the full weight of the law, adding stiff new penalties for non-compliance with those decisions, and adding new funding to enhance marine shipping and pipeline safety.

Furthermore, we would also extend the temporary 15% mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors for an additional year to support mineral exploration.

● (2345)

These actions are fundamental to maximizing Canada's long-term economic potential at a time when this objective has never been more important.

It is estimated that energy and other major resource projects could generate more than \$500 billion in new investment in Canada over the next 10 years, and that scale of investment could make a real difference in insulating Canadians from the sort of economic problems making headlines elsewhere in the world.

Bill C-38 would also improve Canada's employment insurance program, with a focus on promoting job creation, removing disincentives to work, supporting unemployed Canadians and quickly connecting people to available jobs. At the same time, it would ensure stable, predictable EI premium rates by eliminating premium rate increases to 5¢ each year until the EI operating account is in balance and then moving to a seven year break-even rate. It would help build a fast and flexible economic immigration system to meet Canada's labour market needs. It would also make gradual adjustments to the old age security program to put it on a sustainable path for future generations.

At the same time, the bill would legislate our government's commitment to sustainable and predictable transfers to provinces and territories in support of health care, education and other social programs and services that are among Canadians' highest priorities. This includes extending total transfer protection to 2012-13 to ensure that a province's total major transfers in that year are no lower than in a prior year, representing \$680 million in support to affected provinces.

The jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act would modernize Canada's currency by gradually eliminating the penny from Canada's coinage system.

It would modernize the back office of government, refocusing programs and services to make them more effective and efficient and making it easier for Canadians and businesses to access them.

*Government Orders*

For families, including some of the most vulnerable, the bill would expand health related tax relief and income tax systems to better meet the health care needs of Canadians while also helping Canadians with severe disabilities and their families by improving the registered disability savings plan.

Last but not least, Bill C-38 would help ensure Canada's housing market remains strong and stable by enhancing the governance and oversight framework for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to ensure its commercial activities are managed in a manner that promote the stability of the financial system.

As part of these improvements in mortgage oversight, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, or OSFI, would be given a role in assessing CMHC's commercial activities, particularly its mortgage insurance and securitization programs. These changes would contribute to improving governance and oversight of mortgage lending practices in Canada, contributing to the stability of the housing market, which will benefit all Canadians.

Those are just a few of the specific measures in Bill C-38 that we would like to enact for the benefit of Canadians. However, for that to happen, we need to get the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act through Parliament. If the opposition wants to debate these measures on substance, the government has shown it is more than willing to respond.

In fact, Bill C-38 has already received the longest House of Commons debate at second reading and finance committee consideration of any budget in at least over two decades. A special subcommittee was struck to review and further debate the responsible resource development section as well. At the finance committee there were nearly 70 hours of hearings and literally hundreds of individuals who spoke to the legislation and its importance, for example, groups like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that called economic action plan 2012 "positive news for small business".

Coming out of the global recession, Canada finds itself on remarkably stable footing. We have relatively low debt levels as compared to other industrialized nations and a plan to eliminate the federal deficit. As a result of this, we have a tremendous opportunity. Out of the fires of this current economic crisis, a stronger Canadian future is being forged. With continued economic and trade growth, we can continue to develop our country's role as a true leader on the global stage. That is what this federal budget is all about.

Our government intends to continue moving in a direction of strong economic growth, low taxes and long-term prosperity that will benefit all Canadians.

• (2350)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoulu, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech and I must admit I am troubled by his closing comments.

I want to believe in the dream he is selling, but the problem is that Canada will become increasingly intertwined in the global context and will be at the mercy of what is happening around the world.

When we develop natural resources, which is not bad in and of itself—on the contrary, it is a great Canadian tradition—when we give these natural resources such a important place in our economy and, when they fuel our trade with other countries, then we need not be surprised if there is some backlash.

Considering the economic downturn in Europe, the slow economic recovery in the United States and the fact that the four BRIC countries are having problems of their own, how can my colleague believe in such a rosy future for our natural resources?

[*English*]

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Mr. Speaker, I noticed that my opposition colleague across the way spoke about being troubled. Let me tell members that I am also troubled. I am troubled by the fact that when we bring forward measures to try to make sure our economy continues to be one of the strongest in the entire world, to make sure we are insulated from some of the problems in Europe and other countries to the best degree we can, when we look at measures to ensure we can continue to grow our economy and develop our resources but do so while respecting the environment, when we look at improving trade opportunities for Canadians through new trade deals and expanding trade deals, when we try to do all of these for the best interests of the Canadian economy to make sure Canadian businesses continue to thrive and create jobs for Canadians, and I certainly look at our record of more than 700,000 net new jobs created over the past few years, certainly we have been doing all this for the benefit of Canadians to ensure that our economy continues to thrive and grow.

However, the NDP members continue to vote against it and try to delay and deter all this from happening for the benefit of all Canadians. That is what troubles me.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague from Wild Rose.

The government members like to say that the opposition is fearmongering. However, there is so much of a void out there, such a lack of information on so many aspects of the pieces of legislation that are impacted by this particular budget bill, and EI is one that has certainly caused a great deal of concern. Perhaps at this late hour, we could help clear up one aspect of it. This is a specific question that I got from a member of the building trades council. Coming from Alberta, the member knows that the building trades have helped build that province and contributed to building this country. Many of the trades travel from project to project during shutdowns. There is a large number of workers needed for a short period of time. Here is the question.

Once an electrician finishes up with one particular project and he comes back and is waiting for the next project to go, if he gets an offer to go and work at the fish plant, will he have to take that position outside the union, not on the union books or anything like that? An electrician is an electrician I guess in the eyes of this legislation. Will he have to take that or risk not being able to garner his benefits? It is a very direct question.

• (2355)

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Mr. Speaker, simply put, the member was obviously talking about some of the changes to employment insurance, but he also talked about feeling that we were accusing him, his party and the other opposition members of fearmongering. They have certainly been talking about not having an opportunity to debate. Here we are near midnight debating this bill and will be doing so over the next couple of weeks. We have had more debate on this bill at second reading and at the finance committee than there has been with any other budget over the past 20 years, and possibly more.

However, the member asked about employment insurance reform. What we are simply trying to do there is make sure we are connecting Canadians who want to work with available work. We are making sure that when businesses are looking at options such as temporary foreign workers, and he mentioned Alberta, my province, where we do have labour shortages, we are trying to make sure we connect Canadians to the available jobs so that they can get back to work.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before I give the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel the floor, I must inform her that I will have to interrupt her at midnight when the time provided for government business expires.

The hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, thank you, and I will wish you good night in advance because I am the last to speak and I have only five minutes.

During my last speech on this subject, I provided a virtually endless list of the acts that will be changed for the worse by this bill. These changes will be especially bad for the most vulnerable Canadians.

I rise in the House this evening to say that this bill is an assault on democracy. This massive omnibus bill goes way too far, well beyond what was announced in the budget. In fact, many of these measures are contrary to what the Conservatives promised during the last election campaign.

It does not address development or prosperity. The Conservatives claim that this budget is about job creation, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that it would result in the loss of 43,000 Canadian jobs.

The truth is that a third of this bill is about eliminating environmental protection regulations. After much consideration, I am convinced that the real theme of this legislation is a massive attack on government transparency.

Not only does the introduction of such an all-encompassing bill harm the public institutions that Canadians count on, but it is also an assault on democracy, as evidenced by the fact that the government simply does not care about the impact of the changes in this bill.

[English]

What do members expect from a government that was found in contempt of Parliament only a little over a year ago? The

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Conservatives have not changed their tune and are only strengthening the powers of the executive in their ability to evade the scrutiny of Parliament and that of their constituents. Before the last election, the Conservatives were frustrated that they could not get away with their agenda because of democratic debate, which led to amendments and compromise that helped government work for all Canadians. How terrible. Now, they no longer have that problem. If we do not like it, they have a majority and they do not feel any obligation to listen to us despite their democratic duty to do so.

We have seen this before in the House with a truly extravagant number of time allocation motions. We have seen it in committee where in camera is used by the Conservative members to cut off public debate and ram through their agenda. Now we see it with this bill, which only continues to show their disdain for democracy and for the Canadian electorate.

[Translation]

With this bill, the government is showing its utter contempt for Parliament and democracy. It is concentrating power in the hands of the executive in an incredible way, and yet it is telling us, “Do not worry; trust us.”

I will continue my speech tomorrow.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel will have six and a half minutes for her speech and five minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on this motion.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (2400)

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in March, we heard ominous noises from the government. Some people hinted that the Shawinigan-Sud Tax Centre, which employs as many as 1,500 people at certain times of the year, might close.

When my colleague from Trois-Rivières and I asked the minister about this, we did not get a straight answer. There are persistent rumours and fears. The employees of the centre are understandably worried. What we are asking for today are clear answers.

When I asked the hon. Minister of National Revenue if there were any studies or reports on the economic and social impacts of closing the centre or keeping it open, I got no answer. When I asked what the results of the latest performance evaluation of the centre were, again I got no answer. When I asked when a final decision would be made, again I got no answer.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Even when we first raised the issue, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and the Minister of Labour referred to the automation of employment insurance claims. The Shawinigan-Sud Tax Centre does not process employment insurance claims. The parliamentary secretary does not have a good handle on this matter and has confused employment insurance and taxation. Even more disturbing is the fact that she is not denying these rumours. The government is not dispelling doubt. The people in my riding count on these jobs.

Since the 2012 budget was tabled, public servants have been nervous, and rightly so. They do not know what will happen to their jobs. The government is allowing rumours to swirl and, in the meantime, thousands of families are experiencing the stress of uncertainty. That is not humane. Federal government cuts will reduce services and swell the ranks of the unemployed across the country.

I am worried and it is my duty as an elected member to again raise this matter. I have not been reassured and I am afraid of how these cuts will affect the people of my riding. Not only could people lose their jobs, but the reduction in services to the public could also have consequences.

[English]

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege to address my colleague for the first time in the House. I want to congratulate her on her fortitude in staying here until this late hour. I know she has a family and it speaks to the courage of some of the women parliamentarians in the House.

At this point in time, especially with the debt crisis in Europe, it behooves our government to look at ways to ensure that our financial house is in order. We are doing so in large part with budget 2012 and part of the bill that we debating tonight, Bill C-38. The goal of the bill is to ensure balanced finances, while spurring job creation and economic growth. We have the made in Canada approach to ensuring the long-term prosperity of our country.

With that, we need to ensure that core services are still delivered and that the responsibilities of government are maintained and carried out. On my colleague's question about her specific riding and the tax centre therein, I am certainly not in a position to comment on rumours or speculation. However, our government will ensure that core services are delivered and that we are wise stewards of taxpayer funds.

She made some good comments about looking at job creation and ensuring long-term growth in the country. I would ask her to look at some of the policies we have put in place over the last few years since we became government. Since July of 2009, our economy has created over 760,000 net new jobs across the country, over 90% of which are full time and many of them in Quebec. It is that track record that we seek to improve upon, while delivering core services and ensuring the stability of our social program funding for Canada's long-term prosperity.

• (2405)

[Translation]

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague. No, it is not easy. It is midnight. I am sure everyone here

is tired. We are working hard these days. As I said, it is midnight, yet I am here and, like my colleagues, I want some answers.

The government is not being clear. I want to know what impact these cuts will have. The government cannot refute these allegations, so I remain concerned. On June 8, 2012, the Canada Revenue Agency and the Union of Taxation Employees met, but the answers are always the same. The agency maintains that the decisions are confidential. This is bad news.

Can the member tell us when the government will set the record straight regarding cuts to the Canada Revenue Agency?

[English]

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, again, to speak to some of my colleague's concerns, across government we are seeking to ensure that we are delivering core services with excellence and to the level of standards that Canadians expect.

However, while we are doing that, we are also being wise stewards of taxpayer funding and promoting a plan to ensure the long-term growth and prosperity of our country.

THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak tonight on an issue I raised earlier this year with the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

In the Northwest Territories, the biomass energy strategy of conversion of large buildings to this form of energy for heating has been an unqualified success. The program has been carried out for the last two to three years. We are seeing much reduced costs in heating these large buildings. We are seeing a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of a considerable amount through the use of biomass energy, mostly from waste products from sawmills in Alberta and British Columbia.

This is a very big opportunity for northern Canada to reduce its cost of living. These opportunities provide energy that is clean and that has very good environmental characteristics in terms of handling and carrying. The wood pellets that are being employed are half the cost of the most common heating feature in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut, which is home heating oil. In fact, 175 communities across northern Canada rely almost entirely on this product, which is very expensive.

Therefore, my question for the minister was, as the Department of Public Works and other government agencies have many large buildings throughout northern Canada, did the government have a program or had it considered a program that would convert these buildings in northern Canada to this new-found heating source?



*Adjournment Proceedings*

If this were accomplished, we would see that the market for the product would grow very quickly in the three territories. The federal government could be a shining example of how to buy into a successful program. We would see the volumes go up. This is not a small affair. The use of fuel oil in the three territories are in excess of half a billion dollars in costs for heating throughout those three territories, whether in homes, commercial buildings or in industrial facilities.

The federal government's role in this as a promoter of clean energy would be very useful to the north. The conversion of its buildings' heating to wood pellets or this renewable form of energy would provide an extra market for entrepreneurs to develop supply chains to supply this product throughout the north and many smaller users, such as residences and small businesses, would benefit from this transfer.

It is a very simple, straightforward question. Will the government consider this program? Will it work toward the directions that are turning out to be successful in the north and work with northerners to make a better life for ourselves?

• (2410)

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is actually a great topic. Biomass and biofuel energy are ways to produce green energy and certainly something I acknowledge.

I have seen many different and interesting technologies cross my desk, not only this year but in my previous life at the University of Calgary. It is something that is uniquely Canadian in that we have a thriving sector working in R and D. In fact, our government is supporting this area. I can think off the top of my head of Sustainable Development Technology Canada and several other agencies that are working to promote both the development and receptor capacity for these new technologies.

As far as the adoption of technology goes, our government has invested heavily in this area through the eco-energy renewable power program. The government invested up to \$1.48 billion over 14 years to support renewable power sources, such as wind, solar, biomass and hydro energy. Also, the eco-energy innovation initiative will invest \$281 million over five years to support the development and demonstration of clean energy technologies. This will help give

Canada's entrepreneurs and manufacturers a leading edge in energy innovation. This program currently supports 104 projects across Canada, representing 4,458 megawatts of capacity.

I know that our government is investing in both the research and adoption of a variety of clean energy sources. In Canada we are blessed by having over 75% of our electricity produced by renewable or non-carbon-emitting sources. This is certainly something that our government has supported and has invested in, and it will continue to do so.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, in reality there is no need for technological development. There is no need to actually even come up with the capital. Private enterprise has taken hold in this market throughout the north, but without the federal government actually putting its buildings up for conversion, even the private enterprise cannot enter into that market. With the federal government not having a program that says it wants to convert, this will not happen. If it simply puts out tenders to provide heating for its buildings over a period of years, we will see that the competitive prices that it achieves from those tenders will spur the industry.

It is not really a very difficult conversion for the government to make; it simply has to have the will to do it. I encourage the government to go ahead with that.

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague opposite for his question and for his interest in ensuring that we have clean, renewable sources of energy in the north. I want to reiterate that our government has invested heavily in the adoption of such technologies, and certainly this is something that we will continue to support through our budgetary measures in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for St. John's East is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:14 a.m.)



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