



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, December 3, 2012**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 3, 2012

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1105)

[*English*]

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SPEAKER'S RULING—BILL C-464

**The Speaker:** The Chair would like to take a moment to provide some information to the House regarding the management of private members' business.

[*Translation*]

As members know, after the order of precedence is replenished, the Chair reviews the new items so as to alert the House to bills which at first glance appear to impinge on the financial prerogative of the Crown. This allows members the opportunity to intervene in a timely fashion to present their views about the need for those bills to be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

[*English*]

Accordingly, following the November 7, 2012, replenishment of the order of precedence with 15 new items, I wish to inform the House that there is one bill that gives the Chair some concern as to the spending provisions it contemplates. It is:

[*Translation*]

Bill C-464, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act (parental leave for multiple births or adoptions), standing in the name of the member for Verchères—Les Patriotes.

[*English*]

I would encourage hon. members who would like to make arguments regarding the need for a royal recommendation for this bill or any of the other bills now on the order of precedence to do so at an early opportunity.

[*Translation*]

I thank honourable members for their attention.

[*English*]

It being 11:05 a.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

### COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS IN CANADA ACT

The House resumed from October 2, 2012, consideration of the motion that Bill C-420, Commissioner for Children and Young Persons in Canada Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the bill introduced by my colleague from Westmount—Ville-Marie aims to appoint a commissioner for children and young persons in Canada. I agree with the substance of these measures.

I became involved in the NDP because I saw the work my party has been doing for years, including for instance, the motion moved by former NDP leader Ed Broadbent aimed at eliminating child poverty by the year 2000. I probably do not need to point out that successive governments have failed to achieve that goal. Nor do I need to explain how hard my colleague from Timmins—James Bay has been working on behalf of aboriginal children, particularly on initiatives such as Shannen's dream.

The current state of affairs is appalling. Canada is no longer a leader when it comes to children's well-being. Out of 30 OECD countries, Canada ranks among the bottom third regarding infant mortality, health, safety and poverty. Those statistics are cause for alarm. Our children and teenagers should be at the centre of our policies and actions. We should work on their behalf. We should not need a commissioner to remind us of that, but unfortunately, as history has shown, it seems we do.

Regardless of the mandate of such a commissioner and the impact the office will have, we as a country must take a greater interest in our children. We should invest now to provide them with better services and better living conditions. This summer, I attended the Canadian Medical Association's annual meeting in Yellowknife, where the focus was on health determinants. Delegates attended a presentation by Sir Michael Marmot, a subject matter expert from the United Kingdom.

*Private Members' Business*

Social determinants of health are gaining greater attention and being more widely studied. A number of health-focused organizations are investigating them. One of the highest-profile organizations studying health determinants is the World Health Organization. WHO defines social determinants of health as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system.

These circumstances reflect policy choices and are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities—the unfair and significant differences in health status seen within and between countries.

In his presentation, Sir Marmot identified six strategic objectives for healthy living, and I would like to list them all: strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention; create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities; ensure a healthy standard of living for all; create fair employment and good work for all; enable all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives; and give every child the best start in life.

As Sir Marmot said in his presentation, the longer we wait to rectify inequalities, the worse problems associated with low income become. Quoting from his own work, *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*, he said:

Disadvantage starts before birth and accumulates throughout life. Action to reduce health inequalities must start before birth and be followed through the life of the child. Only then can the close links between early disadvantage and poor outcomes throughout life be broken.

• (1110)

The evidence is there and experts have said it on more than one occasion: we must address the socio-economic factors. Poverty has an impact on health. It has an impact on education and crime.

In the case of health, I would like to provide some statistics from the Canadian Medical Association: 68% of Canadians with an income greater than \$60,000 describe their health as excellent or very good. For Canadians with an income of less than \$30,000 a year, this rate drops to 39%, a difference of 29%. Furthermore, 59% of those with an income of less than \$30,000 accessed the health care system, compared to 43% of those with an income of \$60,000 or more.

Canadians with an income of \$30,000 or less are also more likely than those with an income of \$60,000 or more to use tobacco—33% versus 10%—and to have been diagnosed with a chronic illness—41% versus 28%.

With regard to children, I would like to point out that 22% of children in families with an income of less than \$30,000 are very or somewhat overweight, compared to 9% of children in families with an income of over \$60,000. I would like to remind hon. members that not everyone can afford to register their child in hockey, especially if the family income is less than \$30,000.

The numbers are there and I have just presented some of them. Yet, this government has decided to punish the poor of our society. The government's ad hoc employment insurance reform will penalize many families and will have an impact on children. The cuts to the

federal tobacco control strategy will have an even greater impact on people with incomes of less than \$30,000. All these measures will affect our health care system.

It is important to create this type of position for the health of our children. In a 2009 report, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the CPS, called for the creation of a commissioner for children and young persons. The report explains that the CPS recommends that a Canadian commissioner for children and young persons be appointed so that the opinions and needs of these individuals are taken into account in all federal government initiatives affecting them. UNICEF Canada and a number of other child advocacy groups have made the same request.

We need tools to ensure that Canada fulfills its commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, we must look at the big picture and make a consistent effort. By not giving our children what they need now, we are jeopardizing their health, and that is unacceptable.

**Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a bill for the establishment of a commissioner for children in Canada is crucial because of the deterioration of the socio-economic conditions of children in our country.

For years, one crop of MPs after another has tried to fight poverty and to ensure that Canadian youth have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Unfortunately, we have to admit that Canada's children and youth continue to be on the excessively long list of people who are exploited, abused and criminalized. The number of children suffering from malnutrition continues to grow. Children who suffer the consequences of hunger, violence and a lack of education are legion in our society, and we are concerned about this scandalous situation in a developed country such as ours.

In a special report to the UN, which was tabled in Geneva on February 6, 2012, the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates stated that Canada must do better today and tomorrow. Irwin Elman, the Ontario representative of the group, pointed out that Canada does not have a monitoring mechanism to provide a detailed and reliable national view of living conditions and the progress made in furthering the rights of aboriginal children and youth. This council also reiterated its request for the creation of a national commissioner for children's rights.

We must examine this proposal to create a commissioner for children in the context of budget cuts that are affecting the most disadvantaged in our society. Creating a commissioner for children and young persons would remind us of our commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Defending the rights of children around the world has been part of our political agenda for decades. We now have the opportunity to take another important step to protect youth.

*Private Members' Business*

The notion of fundamental rights has changed significantly since the creation of the League of Nations and the publication of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As a society, we are now in a position to include measures for child protection and development that are consistent with our collective wealth. A country like ours, with our material and intellectual resources, is in a position to create this structure independent from the government and to give children a voice.

As set out in the bill, a commissioner for children must be independent in order to inform the public about the shortcomings of and the progress made by our institutions dedicated to children and young people. The position of commissioner is held during good behaviour for a term of five years, in order to create the judicial independence needed for the investigations that are part of his or her duties. The commissioner would protect all children benefiting from the laws and conventions that define and govern children's rights. The commissioner has jurisdiction over criminal laws that affect the rights of children and young persons. The application of these child protection principles is very complex, particularly in light of the number of laws, regulations, departments and agencies that directly or indirectly influence these rights.

The machinery of government is so complex that it is unrealistic to think that elected officials have access to all the information they need to connect children's fundamental rights with the thousands of government programs operating in rural or urban regions.

•(1115)

A commissioner for children would have to promote the government's rights and responsibilities towards children, in order to democratize this information and to reach all segments of the Canadian population.

We have failed to protect our children from the discrimination and suffering resulting from violence and abuse. We have ignored our important obligations to protect children. We have enshrined laws and conventions on human rights, while overlooking the main issue of applying the related principles.

The mandate of a legislator includes obligations related to executing the rules that govern our democracy. Essentially, we have agreed on the principles of education, mental health, criminal liability and children's health care. However, how can we ensure equity and respect for the rights provided for by our laws and conventions without creating an office of the commissioner that is independent from the government? How can we claim to support justice without knowing how children and young people are treated by our court system?

Answers to our questions about the status of children in Canada are long overdue. We live in a huge country where our guiding principles must be applied fairly. We cannot allow departments to take a random approach to honouring the fundamental rights of children. Despite thousands of government programs to combat inequality, children across Canada are victims of abuse, exploitation and poverty. Our institutions are so complex that sometimes we do not hear the complaints and grievances of Canadians, be they young or old.

Creating a children's commissioner dedicated to the study of social phenomena affecting children is in line with the principles in our laws. The commissioner could work with agents across the country to demonstrate the application of laws and conventions that define children's rights. The commissioner could receive reports and recommendations from individuals and groups concerned about the status of children in an effort to enrich our understanding of the situation.

This bill promotes the involvement of children in decision-making processes that affect them. The greater interest of the child guides legal decisions in Canada, and the office of the commissioner must make involving children a priority in fulfilling its mandate. We have agreed to basic rights for all citizens of this country, but our work will not be done as long as our Charter, laws and conventions apply only in theory, and we continue to fail the populations that our institutions should be protecting.

•(1120)

**Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my Liberal colleague for introducing this bill, which will make up for the Conservative government's lack of leadership since coming to power.

I will explain in detail why the NDP and I support this kind of initiative. It is based on the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child. For years, the NDP has been championing the rights of children in Canada, supporting the work of those advocating for the rights of children, and promoting collaboration with international bodies like the UN.

We know that co-operation with international organizations has been going poorly lately because of the Conservatives' attitude. However, once Conservatives are removed from power in 2015, I am confident that we will be able to get Canada back on the right track as a fairer, greener, more prosperous country that cares more about the well-being of children.

As I mentioned, we support this bill. However, we do have some reservations, since the Conservative government will be the one to appoint the commissioner. Considering the Conservatives' patronage appointments in the past, particularly regarding the immigration bill that gives more power to the minister, we are very reluctant to give the Conservatives any more power. I am pretty sure that people watching us at home feel the same way. That said, I would like to put partisanship aside, because it is actually a pretty good bill and I want to make sure we have enough time to debate its merits.

In 1991, Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Essentially, it committed all parties, including Canada, to take all necessary measures to ensure the respect, protection and implementation of children's rights. It also required Canada to review its legislation on children. Furthermore, it committed the parties to re-examine their legal system, social services and health care networks and their education system, as well as to review the funding levels available to those systems.

*Private Members' Business*

Unfortunately, the Government of Canada deserves a failing grade. If this were a grade on a report card, Canada would get an "F". It might get a few marks for effort. However, at the end of the day, since Canada does not have such a commissioner or an independent person responsible for the well-being of children, many of the ratifications and measures proposed by the government and meant to protect young people or ensure their well-being have been nothing but empty promises. No one behind the scenes has really done anything to implement the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

If a commissioner were appointed, he or she could play a leadership role. He or she could either be part of the parliamentary branch or be completely independent. We in the NDP prefer that people who serve the House of Commons be independent. That way, it is easier to ensure positive results no matter which party is in power. In that regard, I would like to congratulate Kevin Page, who has demonstrated that the independence of individuals in positions like his is crucial to playing a leadership role in Canada.

Bill C-420 would establish the position of commissioner for children, who would be responsible for ensuring that Canada complies with provisions of the convention, as I mentioned, and also for implementing the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which Canada also ratified in 2000 and 2005 respectively. These are good measures that have the support of the NDP, and we truly want the government to take a leadership role in these areas. The position of commissioner established by this bill would allow the government, as the leader, to fulfill this role.

According to the report of the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, many children in Canada face obstacles to realizing their full potential as young Canadians, even though most children's basic needs are met. Unfortunately, even in a rich country such as Canada, too many children live in poverty for many reasons that I do not necessarily wish to address at this time.

• (1125)

My purpose is not so much to speak about poverty as to describe the situation of our young people. That is an area in which Canada also lags behind. While doing my research, I even learned that Canada is lagging behind with respect to the basic indicators of child welfare. This is due in part to the fact that, as I mentioned, Canada's federal system does not have an intergovernmental mechanism to ensure that international treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child are implemented across the country.

The NDP supports the appointment of an independent or parliamentary child advocate. We support this measure, but we also believe that Canada could take the lead in other initiatives, especially if the Conservative government is interested—I am reaching out here—in introducing a children's health initiative to support and expand healthy meal programs for children in community centres and schools. These are practical measures that can make a difference and help many of these young children whose basic needs are not being met.

Are hon. members familiar with Jordan's principle? It is a principle that the NDP supports. In short, this principle seeks to resolve jurisdictional disputes between two federal government departments or between two levels of government, for example, between the federal and the provincial or territorial governments. This prevents interminable delays during which the needs of the child are not met.

Let us take the example of an aboriginal child who should normally have the same access to services as any other Canadian. Since it is unclear which authority is supposed to pay for these expenses, aboriginal young people often have to wait a very long time before their needs are met.

We therefore support Jordan's principle, which would make it possible, in the case of such jurisdictional disputes, for the government or department of first contact to meet the needs of the child and then refer the matter to the jurisdictional dispute mechanism. We believe that it could be worthwhile for the commissioner to play a role in this regard.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is a strong supporter of the Shannen's dream initiative. I would like to commend him for the great work he has done in this regard. Shannen's dream urges the federal government to ensure that all first nations children attend a school that is in good repair and that all first nations schools receive equitable education funding.

Unfortunately, the poverty rate in Canada is high, particularly among first nations. I find this very distressing. I am proud to live in a country that is rich in human and financial resources, but I think it is very unfortunate that so many people are still falling through the cracks.

To come back to the issue of creating a national office of child and youth health, I think that we could even rally the Conservative member for Simcoe—Grey to this cause and get her support. In fact, in 2007, she was the government's advisor on healthy children and youth. She published a report entitled, "Reaching for the Top", in which she strongly recommended that Health Canada and the Government of Canada create a national office of child and youth health. I hope that the Government of Canada will support the Liberal initiative as the NDP is doing.

At the end of the day, we need leadership in Canada with regard to children's health, particularly since, unfortunately, Canada is doing so poorly in terms of measures to support early childhood development, for example. The OECD countries devote an average of 0.7% of their GDP to child care expenses and early childhood development. Were hon. members aware of this? That is more than double Canada's investment in this area. What is more, only 50% of Canadian children with disabilities have access to the technical assistance they need to ensure their well-being.

Canada is definitely lagging behind, which is a major problem. I would simply like to remind hon. members that the NDP has been a strong advocate of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child for a long time. I would like to commend my Liberal colleague and thank him for introducing this measure in the House. I would like to remind those watching at home that the NDP will continue to stand up for children's rights. I hope that the Conservatives will vote with their hearts in favour of this bill, as the Liberals and New Democrats are going to do.

• (1130)

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-420. I would like to thank those who have spoken to this bill, who have shared their thoughts with me and who have taken the time to listen to me.

In speaking with other members of Parliament, I was reminded of how parliamentarians, regardless of party, can work together to achieve common goals.

[English]

Indeed, at the heart of the bill is a goal that we all have in common, improving our children's lives. Twenty-three years ago all parties committed to end child poverty by the year 2000. We failed. We did not fail because we could not agree or because we did not care; we failed because we got distracted. That is why we need a commissioner for children, so that we do not get distracted again from improving our children's lives. This is not a partisan issue. The Liberals were in power for most of the last 23 years and we did not create a children's commissioner.

Over the past weeks I have heard several concerns about a children's commissioner, that it would be costly, redundant and would step on provincial toes. While I understand these concerns, I do not believe they apply when one takes a closer look at Bill C-420. Let me address each of them in turn very quickly.

First, some have said that the \$5 million cost of a children's commissioner would be better spent on programs for children. While these programs are an integral part of what we can do for children, a children's commissioner would help us learn how to use our money more efficiently. For example, many of today's programs for youth are focused on addressing problems after they have arisen. A commissioner could help us focus on prevention, surely a more cost effective way of helping young people. The investment in our children's future is worth every penny.

Second, some have said that a children's commissioner would be redundant, duplicating processes that already exist at the federal level, such as parliamentary studies, reports to the UN and committees within government.

Yes, parliament does study children's issues, but certainly not enough or we would have succeeded in eradicating child poverty. Moreover, it was one of these parliamentary studies, a Senate report entitled "Children: The Silenced Citizens", that recommended establishing a children's commissioner.

Yes, Canada does report to the UN every five years about children's rights, and every five years the UN reminds us that we have not yet established a children's commissioner.

### *Private Members' Business*

Yes, there are committees within government that focus on children's issues, but these committees coordinate between different departments and levels of government. They do not focus on improving children's rights in Canada.

A children's commissioner would provide us with the information we need to improve what we do for our children.

Finally, some worry that a children's commissioner would infringe on provincial jurisdiction. They are right that many issues affecting children are provincial, and because of this nine of the ten provinces have established children's advocates, like the one proposed in Bill C-420. But these provincial advocates are calling for the establishment of a federal commissioner. Why? Because there are many areas affecting children beyond the reach of the provinces, such as aboriginal affairs, youth criminal justice, marriage and divorce law. For example, which drugs can be given to children under state care? Additionally, there are many areas of shared jurisdiction where children are falling into the cracks, like child welfare, health care and combatting child poverty. A federal children's commissioner could study any of these issues without stepping on provincial toes.

Consider a few questions a children's commissioner could ask. How do custody laws affect children going through divorces? How effective has the Youth Criminal Justice Act been in fighting crime among young people? These are but a few examples.

• (1135)

[Translation]

It is by answering questions like these that a commissioner for children can help parliamentarians focus on eliminating child poverty. According to Statistics Canada, today, nearly one in 10 children lives in poverty. The proportion rises to one in four children living with single mothers and one in three children living in aboriginal communities. In all, that is more than a half-million children who live in poverty in Canada.

With the help of a commissioner for children, we can change this.

I urge all members to vote in favour of Bill C-420 to send it to committee, where it can be improved. This will prevent us from once again getting too distracted to focus on eliminating child poverty.

We owe this to our children.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

*Points of Order*

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 5, 2012, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[English]

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Deputy Speaker:** Debate having completed on the private member's business, we will suspend the House until 12 p.m.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:39 a.m.)

## SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12:01 p.m.)

\* \* \*

● (1200)

## POINTS OF ORDER

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I move that, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-45, in clause 321, be amended by adding, after line 13, on page 291, the following: (2.1) The addition of the navigable waters listed below is deemed to be in the public interest and the governor in council shall by regulation, as soon as it is reasonably practicable after the day on which this act receives royal assent, add those navigable waters to the schedule, including with respect to lakes their approximate location and latitude and longitude, and with respect to rivers and riverines the approximate downstream and upstream points, as well as a description of each of those lakes, rivers and riverines, and where more than one lake, river or riverine exists with the same name indicated in the list below, the Governor in Council shall select one to be added, namely:

Lac du Gros Morne, Emily Creek, Pendleton Lakes, Lac du Canard, Fifteen Mile Creek, George Creek, Petit lac des Chevaux, Upper Gimlet Lake, Tatisno Creek, Lac Lise, Healey Lake, Trapper Creek, Lac Boomerang, South Riske Creek, Grand lac Rouleau, Ferrier Lake, Charlie Chief Creek, Lac Walter, Slop Lake, Knife Creek, Petit lac du Rat Musqué, Lunch Lake, San Jose River, Lac de la Bouderie, Twenty Mile Creek, Hendrix Creek, Lac Long, Petitot River, Rivière Yamaska Nord, Hopian Lake, Sand Creek, Lac Blanc, Francis Creek, Taltzen Lake, Lac Bellevue, Three Mount Bay, Genlyd Creek, Grand lac Marlow, Davis Lake, Holte Creek, Ruisseau de la Belle Rivière, Hilltop Lake, Morrissey Lake, Lac Faudeux, Toronto Lake, Skeena River, Lac des Chasseurs, Moss Lake, Sandell River, Lac de la Ligne, Carafel Lake, West Road (Blackwater) River, Ruisseau Bonhomme, Partridge Lake, Peter Aleck Creek, Lac Dupire, Lipsy Lake, Pitka Creek, Lac Beaver, Grass Lake, Fiftyseven Creek, Lac des Érables, Minnow Lake, Ormond Creek, Lac Fortmac, Black Sturgeon Lake, Ling Creek, Lac de la Crute, Alexander Lake, Bulkley River, Lac Côme, Tompkins Lake, Red Rock Creek, Lac Mikwasau, Little Boulder Lake,

American Creek, Lac Vert, White Spruce Creek, Lac Rock, Porter Lake, Lussier River, Lac de la Montagne, MacFarlane River, Nome Creek, Lac Loan, Talbot Creek, Alix Lakes, Ellis Creek, Coglistiko River, Rivière Nouvelle, Betula Lake, Porcupine Lake, Lac Clapier, Grass Creek, Kwanika Creek, Lac à Florant, Boffin Lake, Cornwall Creek, Lac Simard, June Lake, Fortress Lake, Lac Bass, Bolton Creek, Conkle Lake, McCuaig Lake, Lac Ouimet, Larder Lake, Kaiser Bill Lake, Lac du Cerf, Turner Lake, Lac Briend, Pistol Lake, Wasley Creek, Lac Sam, Alexander Lake, Petite rivière Rimouski, Lyn Creek, Lac Otter, Misema River, Keily Creek, Lac Alfred, Flora Lake, Lac du Pylône, Twin Birch Lake, Swamp Creek, Lac à Théodore, Paulson Lake, Lac Sept Milles, Sydney Creek, Lac Doré, McKenna Lake, Cambridge Creek, Lacs Daviault, Chapleau River, Lac de Boue, Grassy Lake, Jackson Lake, Lac du Pont de Cèdre, Walker Creek, Lac Watson, Suez Pit, South Albert Creek, Lac Albanel, Hand Lake, Lac Verrier, Burgess Lake, Thomas Creek, Rivière Chibouet, South Nation River, Chapperon Creek, Petit lac du Castor, Brewery Lake, Étang Irving, Dorothy Lake, Ramhorn Creek, Lac Savignon, Wilson Lake, Durney Creek, Lac Bixley, Swartman Lake, Red Deer Creek, Lac Petasoon,

● (1205)

Sandcherry Creek, Fern Creek, Salmon Arm, Indian River, Lac à L'Aéroplane, Two Island Lake, Etsho Creek, Lac des Robin, Hemlock Lake, Selman Creek, Lac Perdu, Kilpecker Creek, Kitza Creek, Lac Tourville, Hub Lake, Soo River, Anders Lake, Suschona Creek, Rivière Bourlamaque, Ambrose Lake, Big Bar Creek, Lac à Dick, Fullerton Lake, Meldrum Creek, Lac Carbert, Vrooman Creek, Troutline Creek, Lac du Grand Homme, Jawbone Lake, Spahomin Creek, Lac Pougnet, Laval Lake, Pulley Creek, Lac Roy, Rivière Escuminac, Lac Ti-Jean, Lac Carvel, Lac Numéro Trois, Lac Rouge, Lac Secondon, Fullerton Lake, Donaldson Lake, Steed Lake, Clay Lake, Port Darlington, Mackay Lake, Bat Lake, Kettle Lake, The Cut, Pirie Lake, Wood River, Grant Creek, Halden Creek, Jarvis Lakes, Chipesia Creek, Klichu Creek, Eleven Mile Creek, Hewson Lake, Roe Lake, Pulley Creek, Spahomin Creek, Troutline Creek, Akehurst Lake, Little Bobtail Lake, Scott Creek, Hemp Creek, Kuthai Lake, Webster Creek, Orren Creek—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member seems to have a very lengthy list. Usually in these types of situations the motion is put to the House to see if there is consent and then, if there is consent, to move on.

I am going to stop the member there, first to see if there is consent for the motion to be moved—

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am somewhat confused and I would seek some clarity on your most recent decision.

My hon. friend from Halifax was in the process of moving a unanimous consent motion.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** There is no consent.

● (1210)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I will thank the Minister of Public Safety for his comments.



*Points of Order*

As the Speaker well knows, there is very clear direction to the House when a member is in the process of moving a unanimous consent motion. Some have been quite lengthy and complex in their nature. My friend is seeking to amend the omnibus legislation Bill C-45, which removes many tens of thousands of lakes and rivers from the protection of the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which all members know well, and should know page 590 very well, says:

....a Member wishing to waive the usual notice requirement before moving a substantive motion would ask the unanimous consent of the House "for the following motion", which is then read *in extenso*.

This is an important part of the instruction given to this House. After the motion has been read *in extenso*,

The Speaker then asks if the House gives its unanimous consent to allow the Member to move the motion.

It is impossible for the House to make a decision on a motion that has not yet been fully read. That is clearly the direction that has been given to this House.

We have had the former House leader for the government move such a motion on one of their own bills. It was extensive. It was long and complicated. However, the House gave leave for that member to read the extensive motion.

What I am a bit concerned about is that in the decision the Speaker just made to curtail the ability of the member for Halifax to read out the motion, the Speaker called for a question that has not yet been put. Clearly in our instructions that we follow stringently in this place, that question cannot be asked until it has been asked.

I will remind the Minister of Public Safety that the latitude given to members is a liberal latitude and that there is some extensiveness used in guiding the Speaker and this House as to what can be done under unanimous consent motions.

The clarity over the Speaker curtailing the ability of the member for Halifax to read the motion out, and then calling the House to answer the question yea or nay seems to me an impossibility and in direct contravention of the rules that guide this place.

I humbly seek some clarity as to how this process has proceeded.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on that point of order, I would point out the motion being made was made without notice and it requires an extraordinary remedy in the circumstances of unanimous consent of this House. Thus, at any point when it is clear that there is no unanimous consent, I think it is appropriate that be terminated.

I would like to move that in relation to Bill C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage, and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill, and at the expiry of the time provided for the consideration at report stage, and at 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the day allotted to consideration of the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill

then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the eagerness of the hon. government House leader. I have not yet called for orders of the day, so I cannot hear that motion just yet.

However, if I can get back to the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, it does say in O'Brien and Bosc that if no dissent is detected then the House is obviously allowing the member to move the motion.

I take the member's point with regard to the reading of the names. In my view, the member had moved the substance of the motion and was in the process of reading an abnormally lengthy list of names of lakes that would be added. She had the floor for approximately 10 minutes.

There was a similar case that Speaker Milliken dealt with, wherein the member at that time was reading a long litany of the names of members, I believe, and there were several points of order. The Speaker decided that because it was unduly lengthy, and in view of the fact that there was obvious disagreement to the motion being moved, in order to manage the use of the time in the House efficiently he intervened to see if there was consent.

In my view, there is a similar parallel here. As was her right, the member sought the floor on a point of order to ask for consent to put the substance of her motion, and then got into the part of the amendment that added all of the names of lakes, and perhaps rivers, that she was interested in. Given that it was likely to go on for a significant period of time and that she had already had the floor, in the interests of allowing the House to make a decision on that, and sensing that the House was eager to do so, I asked to see if there was even consent for her to move the motion.

I do not want to get into hypotheticals. However, if the House would have granted consent, I am sure the House would have then wanted to hear the whole term of the motion.

I will hear the hon. member again as a courtesy, but I do believe I have made my points on this.

• (1215)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we looked for precedence as well. We think there is an important grey zone. You read the reference in terms of hearing the substance of a motion, yet we have tried to rely on the core issue that guides the House when it comes to unanimous consent.

We looked at the motion from, I believe, Mr. Epp, who started to name various members of Parliament in his motion. In that precedent, he named every member of the Liberal Party by name and riding. Speaker Milliken had to intervene. However, I do not think that the intervention was on its length but rather the fact that the member started to name members of Parliament of an entire party.

### *Government Orders*

We looked at the precedent of the now Minister of Justice who moved a similar motion both in extension and length. It was on a money laundering and terrorism bill where the government sought to make substantive amendments to a bill at this stage in debate, which is exactly what we have tried to do. The minister read out a very lengthy amendment seeking unanimous consent. He rose on a point of order and the House had to hear the entire motion before it could decide whether it was in favour or not of allowing that practice.

We know this place can do almost anything under unanimous consent, and that is what the minister sought to do that day. The member for Halifax is attempting the exact same process.

Reading out those particular bodies of water that would no longer be protected has importance. I am sure members of the Conservative Party would also be interested in this, particularly the Minister of Public Safety, as we had not even got to the lakes and rivers in his constituency that would no longer be protected. His ability to say that he gives no consent before having even heard the motion, or any of the Conservative members to say “nay” before they have heard it, pleads ignorance before the facts have been read out. It is disturbing as to their own decision-making process in that they no before they have heard.

This reminds me of the government House leader who just last week said that it did not matter what amendments would be moved, that the Conservatives would vote against them anyway. It shows a certain amount of disregard for the parliamentary process.

In terms of your role, Mr. Speaker, in this intervention, I want to be quite clear with the way we are approaching this process. This is a grey zone created by moving a substantive and detailed amendment, which the member for Halifax is seeking to do to protect Canadians' lakes and rivers. After the bill passes, these lakes and rivers will no longer have protection for their navigation and other important environment considerations.

The House has not yet heard the terms for the particular lakes and rivers that are involved. I think this would be of interest to not just members in this place, but the Canadians they propose to represent as well. To say “nay” before one has heard about the lakes and rivers in one's riding seems to say that they are not important and that moving the motion is not important.

The Minister of Public Safety can keep muttering out “no consent”, but the fact is he does not yet know the implications to his own constituency, nor do any of the Conservatives. This is why it is important to have the capacity to do this.

Mr. Speaker, I respect the ruling and judgment that you have given in referring to other parts of our practice, but it seems that this quote is quite clear:

With unanimous consent, bills have been advanced through more than one stage in a single day and referred to a Committee of the Whole rather than a standing committee and have even been amended by unanimous consent.

This is what the Minister of Justice, then House leader, did before to address the crime bill. Also:

—a Member wishing to waive the usual notice requirement before moving a substantive motion would ask the unanimous consent of the House “for the following motion”.

This is then read in extenso. It seems to me that maybe you heard the essentials of the motion, Mr. Speaker, in the first iteration from the member for Halifax, but one would hope Conservatives, hearing about an important lake or river in their ridings, might think they should have a moment where they would be allowed to change the legislation for the better.

I know it is a novel concept for the government because in almost 900 pages of omnibus legislation it has not changed a comma or a period. All these things seem to have been made perfect by the Conservatives in their first writing. However, we know that not to be true because this omnibus bill is making corrections to the last omnibus bill.

Therefore, in this case, the member for Halifax is attempting to make improvements to the bill through unanimous consent, which seems to me to be worthwhile and viable according to the rules we are guided by.

I understand your ruling, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the initial preconception. However, in terms of members being able to vote on a motion that they have not yet heard, even if it is large, seems to be a practice that the House should be very careful of and wary in moving down that path, particularly with a government like that one that seems so keen on shutting down debate at all its various stages and allowing legislation to go through untouched.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the points made by the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. However, I would remind him that there are two stages in seeking unanimous consent, the first of which is to ask for the ability to move the motion, and there are many reasons why members may wish to do that or not.

I do find in situations in which we can envisage points of order to seek unanimous consent potentially take quite a bit of the House's time and when there is a clear lack of consent right at the outset, it is up to the Speaker to judge what is in the best interest of the House.

Given the previous example when there had been a practice for the member who was in a certain point of motion, reading names in that case and in this case listing lakes and rivers, because they are unusual and not moved under the normal rubric for motions with proper notice to see if the House would like to continue hearing the motion, or if the House is not giving consent at the outset, is where this is coming from. I appreciate hon. members' points on that.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1220)

[*English*]

### JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2012

BILL C-45—TIME ALLOCATION

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

*Government Orders*

That in relation to Bill C-45, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill and,

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

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I move: That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-45, in clause 321, be amended by adding after line 13 on page 291 the following: (2.1) The addition of the navigable waters listed below is deemed to be in the public interest and the Governor-in-Council shall, by regulation, as soon as is reasonably practicable after the day on which this act receives royal assent, add those navigable waters to the schedule, including, with respect to lakes, their approximate location in latitude and longitude and, with respect to rivers and riverines, the approximate downstream and upstream points, as well as a description of each of those lakes, rivers and riverines, and where more than one lake, river or riverine exists with the same name indicated in the list below, the Governor-in-Council shall select one to be added, namely: Natla Lake, Chartrand Lake, McDonald Lake, Hottah Lake, Moraine Lake, West Hans Lake, Bunting Lake, Grodsky Lake, Lake Bovie, Jennejohn Lake, Germaine Lake, Seven Islands Lake, Fallaize Lake, Fishing Bear Lake, Willowlake River.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. We are going to do the same thing we did in the past where members have a minute to put the question and give the response.

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I move that, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-45, in clause 321, be amended by adding after line 13 on page 291 the following: (2.1) The addition of the navigable waters listed below is deemed to be in the public interest and the governor in council shall, by regulation, as soon as is reasonably practicable after the day on which this act receives royal assent, add those navigable waters to the schedule, including, with respect to lakes, their approximate location in latitude and longitude and, with respect to rivers and riverines, the approximate downstream and upstream points, as well as a description of each of those lakes, rivers and riverines, and where more than one lake, river or riverine exists with the same name indicated in the list below, the governor in council shall select one to be added, namely:

The list is short: Ross Lake, Giauque Lake, La Loche Lakes, McCrea Lake, Bewick Lake, Broken Dish Lake, Sam McRae Lake, Magrum Lake, Winter Lake, Lac à Jacques, Greyling Lake, Basler Lake, Rummy Lake, Tatti Lake and Yellowknife River.

[*English*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I want to clarify whether the question period to the government's invocation of closure has begun and we are now into the process of the 30 minutes. Could you clarify this? The clock started as of a couple of minutes ago after the House leader for the government moved it. Are we now into that section of time?

**The Speaker:** Yes, we are.

Just to make it formal, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the rules reign supreme.

The government has sought again today to shut down debate on an incredibly important budget bill. It seems the number of times government members have to come face to face with democratic principles of the House is fatiguing to them. It is tiresome to them that democracy is such a cumbersome weight to drag around, particularly when the Conservatives have a majority government, of which they like to abuse their power so frequently and with such fervour. The government members need to rationalize and justify, each and every time, why they shut down our ability to hold them to account.

The principal role of any Parliament, and this one in particular, is to hold government to account. Conservative members might be interested in this as well. The last time they did this charade of democracy and parliamentary function was Bill C-38, which stripped away pension rights for seniors, employment insurance, environmental protection. They got a bunch of it wrong. How did that happen? They rammed the legislation through. What are they doing now? Correcting their mistakes from the first time.

The problem with this is not just the Conservative Party's inability to write good legislation, but this impacts the lives of Canadians each and every day. We began to talk about the number of lakes and rivers, tens of thousands of them in our country, that would no longer be protected by the laws of Canada. The Conservatives who claim to have such a love for the great outdoors, the hunters and fishermen they seem to represent, do not seem to mind this idea. It does not really matter when put up against the interests of oil companies and large outfits that do not want to go through the hassle of an environmental assessment, or public meetings and those annoyances.

Again, why does the government seem to be so upset with the idea of democratic process and principle? Why does it seem to have such an allergy toward the idea of debate and of holding government to account and of improving legislation, which this time is meant to afford us, that it has to bring in these measures to shut down debate again?

*Government Orders*

This is so reminiscent of the government members' absolute blunt denial and refusal to admit there was a recession in 2008. We all remember that. If they just stuck their heads in the sand long enough, the recession would simply go away. They introduced an austerity budget in the middle of a global recession and called themselves economic geniuses.

Here we are again with a fragile global economy, all sorts of indications within the Canadian economy that there is serious trouble at home. This is not some European, Greek, American problem. This is a Canadian situation. The government has introduced another bill, another austerity measure in the face of the growing concerns of Canadians. It has cut to the bone on the services Canadians rely upon.

Rather than face the music and hold a democratic debate, the government members do this. They shut down Parliament again. They like prorogation, closures and shutting down debate, but Canadians do not. It may serve the Conservatives in the short term, but we know for a fact that Canadians are watching. Canadians care and want parliamentarians to do their jobs. Why will the government not let MPs do their work?

• (1230)

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about why we are actually extending debate beyond an unprecedented number of hours.

Witnesses were actually brought to 11 different committees. Canadians need to know there were 11 committees that oversaw witnesses appear in front of members of Parliament to answer fair and open questions. It was a great opportunity for those individuals.

I have spent a fair bit of time, as much as I could on weekends, back in Alberta. In fact, I was in Edmonton this last weekend, talking to a number of constituents who were quite encouraged to hear that Canada was still on track. The fact is we have nearly 820,000 more Canadians working now than at the end of the recession. We have said this all along, if there are any Canadians still looking for work, we as legislators need to ensure we put in policies that will encourage those people to get back to work. That is what we are doing.

A lot of this is time sensitive. I can refer to the specific items in here that are time sensitive. We need to get that moving, but we are encouraging debate in the House.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to see the New Democratic Party come alongside the Liberal Party, at least at this stage. In committee, the NDP members were quite eager to vote with the government to pass things through and limit debate on the bill.

Only the Liberal Party has constantly held the government to task for the introduction of this budget bill, and for good reason. We believe that the budget bill, which is historic in terms of the way in which it is abusing the House, needs to be opposed at all stages, not just at third reading or second reading. We are glad that the NDP has finally seen the light and has decided to join the Liberals in opposition to the bill. We look forward to maybe having a little more support toward that.

The government, once again, has seen the merit in bringing in time allocation in order to force through the bill. Surely to goodness it recognizes, given that the bill takes into consideration numerous pieces of legislation, that the bill itself could have been a legislative agenda. It is unfair to expect Canadians, especially parliamentarians, to provide due diligence in ensuring that what we are passing is being done properly.

A number of years ago, when the Liberals brought in a 21-page budget bill, the current Prime Minister criticized the Liberal government saying that the bill was far too big. Now we are talking about hundreds of pages. In fact, the Prime Minister back then told the Liberal government that dividing the bill into several components would allow members to represent the views of their constituents on each of the different components of the bill. There are a lot more components to this bill. We are talking about hundreds of pages as opposed to 21 pages.

What has changed? Why has the Prime Minister decided that these types of bills are proper today when he opposed them so firmly back in the 1990s? Like the NDP, he has had a flip-flop. Why?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just before I go to the Minister of State for Finance, I have allowed both the opposition parties lengthy first questions but from now on questions will be limited to one minute maximum. I expect the responses from the government side will also be limited to that same period of time.

• (1235)

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member referred to some of the pieces that are in the legislation. I knew that a lot of these were time sensitive, so I just did a bit of fact checking to ensure I was right. Passage of this bill is urgently required because a lot of the improvements and enhancements that we are making to grow the economy, to help grow jobs and to make an environment where businesses are interested in expanding their businesses and, therefore, growing their labour populations, a number of these are dependent on getting this passed and receiving royal assent by January 1, 2013.

One, for example, division 14 of part 4, amends the agreement on internal trade implementation. It also repeals subsection 28(3) of the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act. This is important to moving forward so we can actually trade from province to province. I think all members in the House recognize the impediments that we have had. We had a piece of legislation just plain and simply trying to allow Ontarians to enjoy the beautiful wine that is produced in British Columbia. We have internal trade barriers. We need to move forward on getting trade opened up interprovincially.

[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, they keep talking about investment, but one of the internal problems we have is a dollar that is too high for those who want to export their products. The government does not have much to say about that.

Since the member wants to talk about urgency, I would like to raise an urgent matter in my riding: fortunately, the Richelieu River is still protected by the Navigable Waters Protection Act, but none of its tributaries are protected.

*Government Orders*

A river is like a human body: cut off a limb, and the rest of the body suffers as a result. It is ridiculous to suggest that protecting some of our waterways but not others will not have negative consequences. The Minister of Transport said that the Navigable Waters Protection Act had nothing to do with the environment. I am trying to understand how failing to see that all departments are connected can possibly qualify as good governance.

This all seems very irresponsible to me.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, many questions have been answered in the House about the purpose of protecting navigation, and that is exactly what we are doing, but not to the detriment of the actual functioning of municipalities and those who are operating outside the rivers. It is important that we protect navigation but it is also important that we protect individuals who live along those river courses and water courses. That process is already in place. The Minister of Public Safety oversees that.

There have been some challenges all across this country this year with flooding. The Minister of Public Safety does not use navigable waters to deal with that. He uses his authority to compensate people who have been flooded.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before I ask a question of my hon. colleague from Calgary, I must say that my colleague from Winnipeg needs to take a little history lesson. In fairness to him, the fact is that it was the Liberal Party, through confidence votes, that kept the Conservative government alive for 100 votes. He is the last person who should be talking about supporting the Conservative Party.

What the Minister of State for Finance is saying is incorrect. If there are urgent aspects in the bill that need to be done by January 1, the government could easily take those aspects out of the omnibus bill, seek consent from the House, especially from the official opposition, and move those aspects of the bill quite quickly, like we did with the pension reform legislation. The problem is that by lumping all of these aspects into a massive bill, which even he has not read and I doubt anyone in the House has read, there will be mistakes and errors.

Why does the government not just take out those aspects that the member says are so critical, seek unanimous consent, see if they can be moved rather quickly and allow proper debate on the rest of the bill?

• (1240)

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I have read quite a bit of the budget. Everything that is in the budget implementation act, both part one in the spring and budget implementation act two, is a reflection of what was approved by the House in the budget.

I know my hon. colleague wants to slow things down.

We are a government that promised Canadians that we would do everything within our power to provide an environment so they can get a job. We have put forward policies in the budget that will encourage businesses. We are reducing taxes for businesses. We are getting red tape out of their way so businesses can grow, prosper and continue to provide jobs in this country. That is of primary importance.

Canada is in exceptionally good shape when compared to many other countries but we need to continue with our plan so we can ensure that anyone who hopes to find a job has that opportunity.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Thursday evening, in Bouctouche, New Brunswick, I was at a large public meeting with over 600 people who were very concerned about the changes that the government is making to employment insurance, particularly with respect to employers in seasonal industries and those who work for those employers.

The government has decided to shut down debate on this budget implementation bill. That will do nothing to reassure these 600-plus people who are concerned about the changes that the government is making. Many people live in small rural communities where there is no other employment and forcing them to drive perhaps an hour to accept a minimum wage job would not be economically possible.

I am wondering what the Minister of State for Finance could say to these people who are worried that these last minute changes, which his colleague, the Minister of Human Resources, is making, will make the situation much worse and will lead to real anxiety on the part of employers and employees.

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. House leader from the Liberal Party on his appointment.

We are concerned when we hear that people are uncertain about their access to employment insurance. That is why the minister has ensured that she is improving the system and making it more accessible for people. Not only that, as part of this legislation is a portion that would allow people who are still collecting EI to accept part-time work. That was not allowed before. We look at that as a good option. People can now get themselves into a job that, hopefully, will turn into a full-time job.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, people at home are truly worried. They are worried about what is in the budget and especially about the attitude of this government, which amended 70 acts with Bill C-38 and will amend 62 acts, without debate, with Bill C-45.

My question is for the minister. In light of the Conservatives' strategy, will they one day introduce a bill to automatically amend 200 or 300 laws, and then bid farewell to Parliament and parliamentarians for the rest of the year?

That is the kind of distortion of democracy we are seeing. People at home are worried about the Conservatives' brand of democracy.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, what I hear from Canadians as I travel across the country is support for what we are doing, support for the fact that we are providing an EI hiring tax credit for businesses that want to employ more people and yet are just on the edge. This would help them offer a job to someone who is not working right now. That is the message I am hearing from businesses. They are supportive of that. That is also very time sensitive. We all know that for this to take place we need royal assent by January 1, 2013.

*Government Orders*

Why would the hon. member want to stand in the way of businesses being able to hire more Canadians?

• (1245)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will address my question to my colleague across the way.

Today, in *The Globe and Mail*, a study came out on Canadians' attitudes toward democracy which showed that over the past eight years there has been a substantial decline in their belief in the democracy that we hold in this Parliament.

We have seen the government bring closure after closure on a multitude of issues, issues which, in some cases, had no time relevance at all. Does the Minister of State for Finance believe that moving forward with further closure would in any way assure the people of Canada that their democracy is in working shape?

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I, too, was reading the newspaper this morning. Guess what I discovered? I discovered a report from PricewaterhouseCoopers stating that Canada has now moved up three notches and is within the top 10 countries in the world with the best tax rate for businesses to operate.

The last time I checked, it is not government that employed people, it is businesses that employ people. Businesses have moved up its role.

I will quote from the PricewaterhouseCoopers report. It states:

Canada...[has] attractive tax regimes, which impact all companies—in particularly small-medium sized domestic companies.

Is the opposition going to stand up and vote against small and medium-sized businesses having these opportunities?

**Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to hear the Minister of State for Finance talk about Canada being a great place to do business, because in November some 11,000 jobs were in fact shed by the Canadian economy. There seems to be no recognition of that by the government.

He mentioned talking with Canadians. However, I met one of my local business improvement associations yesterday representing small businesses in Danforth, who do not like the Conservatives' hiring tax credit because they know they are going to have to pay it back on payroll taxes down the road. What they want to see instead are apprenticeships and wage assistance so they can hire and train people and we can actually bridge that skill shortage that exists in Canada. They would like to have better education and information from the government.

We know that as front-line services get cut at Service Canada and other areas, Canadians and businesses are having a tougher time getting information out of the government. What is the minister going to do about that? Why is that not in the budget?

Furthermore, the member spoke about committees. Why was there not enough in this budget to have it sent to the industry, science and technology committee? The government likes to talk about being good for R and D, and science and technology and industry, but there was not enough in this budget to actually take it there so we, the members of the committee, could look at it. Why not?

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, frankly, I am shocked. I did not think the NDP members were going to stand up and say there was not enough in this budget implementation bill. I thought they were actually arguing the opposite. However, so be it. I guess maybe the comments by the Liberals earlier on were actually quite reflective of the House not being quite sure of where the NDP is going.

One thing I will reflect on is what Canadians are telling me. They do not want to go down a road where they would be encumbered by a \$21.5 billion carbon tax scheme that the NDP would foist on all Canadians. It is not a trading system but a tax whose revenue would go to the government.

We will not entertain that. It does not make sense. We are working on a low-tax plan. We continue on that plan. That is why we need to get this legislation in place so we can continue with that solid plan that is actually helping Canadians.

• (1250)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I must say I was surprised to hear my friend, the Minister of State for Finance claim that everything in Bill C-45 and Bill C-38 was found in the budget. I think that has been pretty thoroughly disproven.

I would be interested to know on what page of the budget we can find the efforts in Bill C-45 to create barriers to tourism in Canada. That will hurt our economy and hurt our tourism sector. I can see no excuse whatsoever for bringing this forward without adequate consultation. The idea of having an international automated list for tourists from Europe, Australia or New Zealand who want to come to Canada is an added barrier in a sector that is currently struggling.

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, tourism is a very important sector of our economy. I am always proud to attend the Calgary Stampede, where this year we set an incredibly high record. It was their centennial stampede and a new record was set in Calgary this year.

We continue to encourage people to come to Canada to see the wealth of scenery and what a wonderful country we have. They come here and see what a strong government we have. Many of them reflect on that outside of this country.

When I travel outside this country, I proudly wear this lapel pin, the Canadian flag. Many people outside this country have come up to me and said they envy the fiscal position of our country and the strong Conservative government we have. I am always happy to hear that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying that I had the pleasure of working with St. Vincent de Paul volunteers on the weekend. We collected money for families in need. However, and this is the very bad news we heard on the weekend, the volunteers who work in the community and knock on doors are reporting that the situation is deteriorating and families are living in greater poverty than before.

*Government Orders*

This comes as no surprise since the government knows absolutely nothing about the economy. I will give a very specific example, a clear sign that the major players in our economy do not have confidence in this government: the staggering \$550 billion that has not been invested by our businesses. They do not have enough confidence to invest this money and we cannot blame them.

How can my colleague boast about the Conservatives' achievements, when there is absolutely nothing he can say to dispute this clear sign?

[*English*]

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I am not bragging about Canada's accomplishments but about the accomplishments of the businesses of this country that employ Canadians. We have put in place a lower tax plan that leaves more money for businesses to expand. It is businesses that create the jobs and employ Canadians, and that is exactly what makes the economy work.

When I hear comments like the member's, I cannot help but ask, as many of my constituents have done in the last few weeks, what on earth it would cost if we allowed the NDP to throw a \$21.5 billion carbon scheme on top of this.

We put in the budget implementation act improvements to the registered disability savings plan. We are putting in place many things like that, including taxation rules for the pooled registered pension plan. These are all to help Canadians and to keep them sustainable.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am tired of hearing the minister spout nonsense about the carbon tax. I would much rather hear him talk about the list drafted by the hon. member for Halifax.

About a dozen of the lakes she mentioned are in my riding, and I am familiar with many of the other ones, since I am familiar with many lakes across Canada, including some in Yukon and British Columbia. It is clear that the Conservatives know how to shoot their mouths off, but when it comes time to protect our waterways, they do nothing.

Are they not concerned about the fact that an entire industry depends on our lakes and rivers? If they are not protected, that industry will disappear.

•(1255)

[*English*]

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I share my hon. colleague's frustration that we have heard so much about a \$21.5 billion carbon tax. That was not our idea; we are just repeating what the NDP said. They should stop saying it if they do not want to hear any more about it.

We have an incredible environment minister who is actually at an international conference right now, making sure that we are able to protect our environment. I represent some of the most beautiful landscape in this country, beautiful mountains and pristine streams. We all realize how important they are, but we protect them through environmental regulations. We do not do it by stopping or increasing

navigation on any river. There are different departments that look after different things in this country.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

•(1335)

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

(*Division No. 520*)

## YEAS

## Members

Adams	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Daniel
Davidson	Dreeschen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Flaherty	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Holder	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung

*Government Orders*

Lizon	Lobb	Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Lukiwski	Lunney	Patry	Péclet
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie	Perreault	Pilon
Mayer	McColeman	Plamondon	Quach
McLeod	Menegakis	Rae	Rafferty
Menzies	Merrifield	Ravignat	Raynault
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	Rousseau	Scarpaleggia
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson	Scott	Sellah
Norlock	Obhrai	Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
O'Connor	Oliver	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz	St-Denis	Stoffer
Paradis	Payne	Sullivan	Thibeault
Penashue	Poillievre	Toone	Tremblay
Preston	Raït	Turmel	Valeriote — 112
Rajotte	Rathgeber		
Reid	Rempel		
Richards	Rickford		
Ritz	Saxton		
Seeback	Shea		
Shipley	Shory		
Smith	Sopuck		
Sorenson	Stanton		
Storseth	Strahl		
Sweet	Tilson		
Toet	Toews		
Trottier	Truppe		
Tweed	Uppal		
Valcourt	Van Kesteren		
Van Loan	Vellacott		
Wallace	Warawa		
Warkentin	Watson		
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)			
Weston (Saint John)			
Wilks	Williamson		
Wong	Woodworth		
Yelich	Young (Oakville)		
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 152		

**NAYS**

## Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bennett	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brousseau
Byrne	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Eyking	Foote
Freeman	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia	Hsu
Hughes	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls

**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that, because of the proceedings of the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

[*Translation*]

## REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from November 29 consideration of Bill C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012, and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleagues for their reception. I am pleased to rise on behalf of the people of my riding, Sherbrooke, to speak out against Bill C-45. This is especially true considering that I also voted against a time allocation motion. I am pleased to rise here to oppose the budget put forward by this government, which is incapable of managing public funds and our economy.

I would like to elaborate on several matters. Since the bill is 450 pages long, I could address any number of subjects, many of which were not even mentioned in the budget presented in March. So when the Conservatives say that everything in today's budget reflects what was in the budget document in March, that is completely false.

This is another massive omnibus bill that makes changes to many laws. Once again, the Conservatives are trying to rush their legislative measures through Parliament without giving Canadians and their MPs a chance to examine those measures carefully.

The Conservatives say that jobs are being created. However, with this budget, we are talking about a loss of 43,000 Canadian jobs, as pointed out by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who analyzed the number of jobs that would be lost as a result of the Conservatives' measures. They are talking about job creation, but I have a hard time believing it, since they are eliminating 19,000 jobs in the public service. This is quite simply a job-cutting budget.

The government is also severely weakening environmental regulations—



*Government Orders*

• (1340)

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. There is way too much noise in the Chamber. If you want to carry on a private conversation, please exit the Chamber. If you are going to stay in the Chamber, keep the conversations to a very low voice.

The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** Mr. Speaker, they may not like listening to me because I am telling the truth. I will continue my speech despite all of the noise in the House.

I was saying that this bill severely weakens environmental legislation. That was the case with Bill C-38, the first budget implementation bill. Today we are debating the second budget implementation bill, with which the Conservatives are unfortunately continuing to weaken environmental regulations, at the expense of future generations, who will have to live with the consequences of what they are doing.

The NDP thinks that Canadians deserve much better than what the Conservatives have put forward. We will therefore oppose the bill at third reading, just as we have opposed it at the other stages. We will continue to oppose it during the vote that will probably be held tomorrow, since the Conservatives are rushing us through things. We would have liked to have much more time to examine the bill. However, the vote will likely be held tomorrow. The Conservatives left us little time to examine these 450 pages, or, if we also include the budget, these 900 pages. We received the budget in March, and the two bills were then introduced. If we add them together, that makes 900 pages of bills, for a single budget. That is completely unacceptable. Furthermore, it is completely unacceptable that the government does not respect our institutions and is ramming through such massive documents.

As I said earlier, the Conservatives have laid off 19,000 government employees. In my opinion, this is contributing to poor public administration since services have been affected. It is possible to consider all the information available and make cuts in the right areas. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have decided to act blindly and make cuts to services. In Sherbrooke, many services have been cut. Positions have been cut at Service Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency office is no longer accessible to the public at all. No one can go there. The people of Sherbrooke have spoken out against these cuts.

We had hoped that the Conservatives would be more open-minded when we tried to move substantial amendments in committee. However, unfortunately, once again, they did not demonstrate any open-mindedness with regard to this bill. This is not the first time this has happened.

The Conservatives are also making clear cuts to scientific research and experimental development. The budget implementation bill makes changes to the tax credit program. These changes reduce the tax credit rate, particularly for big businesses, and eliminate eligible capital investments. The combined effect reduces government support for businesses that use the scientific research and experimental development program, just when Canadian businesses

most need to promote innovation and productivity if they want to succeed in a very competitive global economy. This will particularly affect the manufacturing sector.

The NDP's vision involves making a place for innovation in the manufacturing sector so that it can remain competitive in relation to other emerging economic sectors that, unfortunately, have a workforce that is paid far less than ours. The government's role is to promote innovation in order to remain competitive in a globalized market, ensure the survival of our businesses, and keep our good jobs here in Canada. If the NDP were in office, things would be done much differently. We would use innovation to increase competitiveness and access other markets, thereby allowing us to keep our jobs. That is the NDP's vision.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives have done a terrible job of managing the Canadian economy. They have created the largest deficit in Canada's history. I am really surprised to hear them say that they are doing such a great job with the economy when they have created both the largest deficit and the largest trade deficit in Canadian history. Then the minister tells us that he is going to miss the deadline. That is further proof of bad management and bad public administration. I feel it is my duty to speak out against that here.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, there are other changes that affect environmental protection. It started with Bill C-38, three-quarters of which was about environmental protection, or rather, environmental deregulation. The Conservatives are chipping away at environmental protection. Bill C-45 is a continuation of the previous bill, particularly with its changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, which will now be called the navigation protection act. This small change will mean big changes. The bill is no longer about water. The word "water" has been removed from the title of the bill.

• (1345)

The government is discarding the concept of protecting water and is focusing solely on navigation, even though we know the two go hand in hand. It should go without saying that protecting navigation means protecting the environment that makes navigation possible. Unfortunately, the Conservatives added schedule 2 to the bill, a list of all of the lakes and rivers that will still be protected under the new act, which will be called the navigation protection act. Only about 180 of Canada's tens of thousands of lakes and rivers will be protected. Most of our lakes and rivers will not be protected under the new act, which will be passed soon.

This means that the Saint-François and Magog rivers, which are in my riding, will no longer be protected by this legislation. People in Sherbrooke have reacted negatively to these changes. People want to know what the long-term effects will be.

*Government Orders*

In the old days, projects that could affect navigation and water bodies required the minister's approval. From now on, projects such as pipelines will not require approval. Maybe the Conservatives are trying to make sure that major pipeline projects can go ahead with no environmental restrictions whatsoever. Pipelines will be laid under, over or even along rivers.

We could also talk about major energy and power line projects that pass over rivers. In Sherbrooke, people were worried about the negative repercussions that such projects could have on lakes and rivers and the potential dangers they could pose. If a pipeline is allowed to pass over a river, needless to say, a leak would have a negative impact on the environment.

Lastly, I would like to quote someone who talked about the bill and whose name might ring a bell with the Conservatives. Warren Everson, senior vice-president of policy at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, had this to say: "The budget 2012 decision to cut a quarter of the SR and ED tax credit was, in our opinion, a step in the wrong direction."

I talked about this earlier in my speech and I would like to emphasize the point: even the Canadian Chamber of Commerce opposes this decision. I therefore hope the Conservatives will come to their senses and support our proposals.

Unfortunately, I know that we are almost out of time, since the final vote will be held tomorrow. Perhaps the Senate will take a different approach and a more enlightened view in order to improve certain parts of the bill.

● (1350)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech.

I have already introduced amendments to Bill C-45 to lessen the destructive changes being made to the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

Will the NDP member vote in favour of my amendments to protect all navigable waters in Canada, and not only those on the short list mentioned in Bill C-45?

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** Mr. Speaker, consider the approach that we tried this morning.

This very morning, we tried to protect all the other lakes and rivers. My colleague, the environment critic, tried to add all the other lakes and rivers to Bill C-45, but did not succeed because the Conservatives were being very closed-minded about it.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives used procedure to reject the proposal. The NDP wanted to add these lakes and rivers. Unfortunately, the Conservatives refused.

If there are other options that will help protect them, we will focus on those and definitely vote for them.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by my colleague from Sherbrooke, and I have a request for him. Could he talk more about the substantial amendments the Bloc Québécois presented with regard to Bill C-45?

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** I thank the member for his question. I did not have time to go over all the amendments from all the parties. However, I can say that we will look at them very carefully to determine if the amendments are pertinent and substantive.

We, too, are doing our part by proposing a number of amendments, and we will support them of course. I am certain that most of them are good amendments. I will have to examine the amendments more closely in order to speak to them all. Generally speaking, we have some very valid points and we hope the government will be open-minded.

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech and for mentioning the famous research and development program known as SR&ED.

He rightly criticized the Conservative government's mistake of reducing tax credits that we know are going primarily to major corporations that make huge profits.

We recently received the Emerson report, dealing with the aerospace industry, a sector that is critical and very important to Quebec and other regions in Canada. This directly affects the manufacturing industry, which is part of the aerospace industry. These are good-quality jobs. Good jobs.

I would like my colleague to speak more to the damage that changes to the SR&ED program will cause.

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. She does extraordinary work on this file.

I had an opportunity to talk to members of the business community in Sherbrooke, who also criticized these cuts and who spoke in particular about the benefits that this could have for them. I spoke a bit about our theory. The NDP's vision is to take advantage of this desire to innovate that is seen among manufacturing companies wanting to develop new technologies to ensure that emerging countries and their workers—who are paid less than workers here—do not come and take all these jobs or to ensure that our jobs are not sent there.

When companies innovate and develop new technologies, they can remain competitive and stand out among emerging countries. That is what will enable Canada to keep good, well-paying jobs, since emerging countries will not necessarily have the technology to take on such ventures. We must take advantage of that to ensure that we remain competitive and keep jobs here in Canada.

● (1355)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to speak today to Canada's economic action plan 2012.

Canada has one of the strongest fiscal positions in the G7. Fitch Ratings, Moody's, and Standard & Poor's have all renewed Canada's AAA credit rating. Canada has, by far, the lowest net to GDP ratio in the entire G7. Due in part to the government's low tax plan, *Forbes Magazine* ranked Canada number one in the world for business to grow and create jobs.

*Statements by Members*

Indeed, with the help of Canada's economic action plan, Canada has emerged as one of the world's top performing industrialized countries.

However, too many Canadians are still looking for work and the global recovery remains fragile. That is why economic action plan 2012 moves ahead to secure jobs, growth and long-term prosperity for Canada by promoting job creation and helping small businesses thrive through reducing red tape, strategic investments, supporting seniors, families and communities, as well as ensuring long-term sustainability through investing in green technology, keeping taxes low and leading the global economic recovery.

My focus today will be on the impact of budget 2012 on small businesses, families and seniors.

With regard to small businesses, our Conservative government recognizes the vital role small businesses play in the economy and job creation. That is why we are committed to helping small businesses grow and succeed.

As someone who started working in my father's wholesale hardware business at the age of 12 on Saturdays and in the summertime, I understood at a very young age the importance of small business to the big picture of Canada and jobs, and ensuring that our economy is strong.

Budget 2012 includes a number of key measures to support the growth of small businesses, like my father's business, and to promote job creation, such as extending the hiring credit for small business. This is a temporary credit of up to \$1,000 against a small firm's increase in its 2011 EI premiums over those paid in 2012. This temporary credit will help approximately 536 employers defray the costs of additional hiring. These employers will take into account these savings when hiring and, in some cases, it may even make the difference between whether to hire a new employee.

For small businesses, we are also reducing red tape, implementing the one-for-one rule and committing to develop a red tape reduction action plan to reduce unnecessary and ineffective regulations. This would small businesses to focus on what they do best, which is grow and create jobs. Ultimately, reducing the administrative tax burden on small businesses does help them create jobs.

Our government is also supporting entrepreneurs, innovators and world-class research. An excellent example of how strategic investment by government in a solid, local company can make a major contribution to our economy is Electrovaya Inc. located in Mississauga South. Electrovaya is an innovative company that designs and builds the next generation of environmentally friendly lithium ion battery energy storage systems for commercial and industrial use. Our government invested \$3.6 million through Sustainable Development Technology Canada to this company to help it develop and provide clean energy technology and create high-quality jobs in Mississauga.

Members may have heard about Electrovaya recently because they were part of the Prime Minister's trade mission to India. Electrovaya signed a deal to provide an Indian company with its lithium ion batteries for electric bicycles that are being sold in North America and Europe. Companies like these create good, high-paying jobs for our community, as well as innovative products to export to other

nations, and they do it in an environmentally sound way to protect the future for all of us.

• (1400)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member will have 5 minutes and 45 seconds when we resume debate.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### GENDER SELECTION

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last June the CBC exposed a disturbing trend in private ultrasound centres around the country. It reported that a majority of clinics were willing to do a gender test in the early stages of pregnancy for people who were considering terminating their pregnancies because their unborn baby was not the right gender.

This followed upon studies that suggested that unfortunately when it comes to unborn baby boys and girls, it is unborn girls who are most discriminated against. They are terminated simply because they are girls.

Canadians are both shocked and upset that this is happening in Canada. When the CBC report was televised, the practice of gender selection pregnancy termination was condemned by all political parties, and by gynecologists, doctors and human rights groups across the country.

Canadians do not tolerate gender discrimination, particularly when it is directed against women and girls, and Canadians definitely do not support the practice of gender selection. I encourage Canadians to speak up, to write their MPs and to publicly voice their grave concern regarding gender selection.

\* \* \*

### LAND MINES

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today is the 15th anniversary of the Ottawa convention on the banning of land mines. Long after the end of a conflict, explosive remnants of war kill 4,000 innocent people each year. Thanks to the Ottawa convention, we have made huge strides in solving this problem over the past 15 years. There is 80% of the world's countries that have joined the convention, and tens of thousands of stockpiled mines that have been destroyed.

We celebrate this day as an example of Canadian leadership on the global stage. We also celebrate the Canadian consensus that has underpinned our foreign policy for generations, the understanding that by working together we can make tangible progress and concrete change for good.

*Statements by Members*

Alas, when the world community looked for similar leadership on the issue of cluster munitions, Conservatives were not a willing partner. The Conservative legislation currently before the Senate undermines the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is an offence to Canada's good name.

Today we reaffirm our commitment to Canada as a leader in multilateral efforts for global peace and security.

\* \* \*

**VOLUNTEERISM**

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** As the year comes to an end, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the tremendous contributions made by the volunteers of non-profit organizations and community associations in my riding of Calgary East.

Having served as the president of Monterey Community Association, I have seen how hard these great Canadians have worked for our communities. Let me give a few examples. At Albert Park Radisson Heights Community Association, volunteers spend time on cleanup events. They also organize the garden club, which encourages people to do home gardening. At Marlborough Park, there are the soccer programs, and at Forest Lawn, they are organizing Christmas for Kids.

I wish to offer a very heartfelt thanks to all of these volunteers. A merry Christmas and a happy new year to all the great Canadians who help our communities.

\* \* \*

**NEIL JAHNKE**

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there was never a stronger champion for cattle producers than Neil Jahnke of Groulx, Saskatchewan. Colourful, forceful and fearless, Neil was a natural leader who worked his heart out for the industry he loved.

He rose to the top of the Saskatchewan Livestock Association, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Beef Export Federation, the Beef Information Centre and Agribition. As Minister of Agriculture in the 1990s, I saw Neil at work expanding markets in Asia, and our exports almost quadrupled. Then, in 2004, as Minister of Finance, I remember how well he fought for \$3 billion to help deal with the fallout from BSE.

He earned the Saskatchewan Order of Merit and a lifetime membership in the Agricultural Institute of Canada. He was also inducted into the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Neil Jahnke was taken from us far too soon last week. Our thoughts and prayers are with Marilyn and his family.

\* \* \*

**PARLIAMENTARY STAFF**

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the unsung heroes in a parliamentarian's world, the staff who support us every day, both on the Hill and at home in our ridings. They support the families who are desperately trying to connect with a loved one who has encountered tragedy overseas. They share in the joy of those

reunited, as they arrive in Canada through our immigration program. They worry about their own safety as they try to assist the troubled or mentally ill individuals who turn to our offices for help and do all they can to make sure they receive the care they need.

It is not uncommon for them to serve coffee to demonstrators as they listen to their concerns, or sit blurry eyed through all-night committee filibusters. In what other job does the simple act of opening a parcel provide both delight and sometimes fear, all the while sorting through hundreds of emails, often with complex questions and the expectation of an immediate response?

On behalf of all parliamentarians, I would like to salute and thank all staff, who truly are the wind beneath our wings.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the NDP is celebrating everything that these individuals have done for our country.

An estimated 4.4 million Canadians have a disability. A great deal of progress has been made in eliminating barriers for people with disabilities. However, too often, they are still expected to meekly accept the barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential and from participating in certain aspects of life that the rest of Canadians enjoy.

The NDP is aware of the difficulties that Canadians with disabilities face: greater financial insecurity, substandard housing, limited job opportunities and unequal access to the health care services they need. We are calling on the government to fulfill its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as quickly as possible.

The NDP team is dedicated to building a fairer and more prosperous Canada where all Canadians can reach their full potential. The NDP is asking all members to work with us to improve the lives of Canadians with disabilities.

\* \* \*

[English]

**VETERANS**

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, veterans have sacrificed much for all that we have. By putting themselves in harm's way, they have helped to shape our country and defended the values we hold dear. As Canadians, it is important that we show our appreciation and thanks and honour their achievements and legacy every day.

*Statements by Members*

Today I would like to recognize all veterans in Richmond Hill, and World War II heroes, such as: Captain Thomas McKeage, a driving force behind the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 375; Art Fortin, who fought on Normandy Beach; Bill Renwick, who parachuted into France on D-Day; Angus MacDonald, who helped to liberate Holland; and Albert Wallace of the Bomber Command. There is William Harris, who works tirelessly assisting other veterans, Jim and Muriel McAlister, Rudy Nardini, Jim Noble, Tom McRae, and, Korean war veterans Bill Robinson and Ron Norton. These and others are our Canadian heroes.

I am grateful to our veterans and know that all Canadians join me in thanking them.

\* \* \*

**CANADIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION**

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, November 24, I had the pleasure of attending the Canadian Christian Association's annual Christmas banquet with some of my parliamentary colleagues. While there was some merriment, the bulk of the evening was spent recognizing volunteers for their great work in the community.

I would like to thank and congratulate the Canadian Christian Association's president, John Gill, and the association's entire board and all of the volunteers for their great work.

The Canadian Christian Association has tirelessly campaigned for human rights around the world. That night, it also paid tribute to two courageous young women, Malala Yousafzai, the young girl shot by the Taliban for championing girls education, and Rimsha Masih, a Pakistani girl who was falsely accused under the country's repressive blasphemy laws. They remind us all that we must renew our commitment to giving a voice to the voiceless and always strive for human dignity and freedom.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CIVIC ACTION**

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with Christmas fast approaching, I would like to commend the generosity of hundreds of Sherbrooke residents who are working hard to help those less fortunate have a nicer Christmas.

As it does every year, the Fondation Rock Guertin will distribute over 1,300 Christmas hampers. Meanwhile, the Sherbrooke firefighters will continue their tradition of distributing toys to hundreds of children. The Knights of Columbus will be serving a generous holiday brunch to hundreds of people in need.

For my part, as the MP for Sherbrooke, I invite the people of Sherbrooke to drop off food items at my constituency office to help respond to the many requests for food assistance that Moisson Estrie receives over the holidays. I would also like to invite my constituents to my annual blood drive, which will be held all day long on December 14 at the Centre Julien-Ducharme in Fleurimont.

I am appealing to everyone this Christmas: please be generous.

Unfortunately, because of the Conservatives' policies, there will be more needy people this year. Changes to employment insurance are one reason why.

That is why I wish to invite my constituents to come and discuss this with me at a public forum I will be hosting at 7 p.m. on December 12, 2012, at 187 Laurier Street in Sherbrooke.

\* \* \*

●(1410)

[English]

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Ms. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 20th annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Today, among others, we honour our inspiring Paralympians, athletes and coaches with disabilities.

Our government is proud to support the Canadian Paralympic Committee and parasport, at record levels. No other government in Canadian history has done more to build an inclusive society. Whether it be funding the labour market agreements for persons with disabilities, which assist over 300,000 Canadians; extending the opportunities fund, which has helped 60,000 people overcome barriers to join the workforce; providing further support to the enabling accessibility fund, which has funded 835 projects to increase community accessibility across Canada; or the creation of registered disability savings programs that allows families to save for the future of their children with a disability which, to date, over 60,000 individuals have signed up for, we are getting the job done.

Unfortunately, the NDP and the Liberals voted against every one of these initiatives.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HIV-AIDS**

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, December 1 was World AIDS Day. Even with prevention campaigns, more than 3,300 new cases are reported every year in Canada. In Quebec, an estimated 20,000 people are HIV positive, and 25% do not even know it. This is alarming and worrisome.

The global situation is even worse as 34 million people are infected. However, even though a recent study by the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS has shown that the best way to prevent the spread of AIDS is with the use of anti-HIV medications, the Conservatives have decided to prevent millions of people from having access to medications by defeating Bill C-398, which would have made medications available to everyone.

The campaign slogan of the Coalition des organismes communautaires québécois de lutte contre le sida states that we should never forget that we must exclude AIDS, not HIV positive people.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for days the person who claims to speak for the NDP on matters of foreign affairs has refused to answer the simple question of how his party would have voted on last week's unilateral resolution at the United Nations General Assembly. While the member for Ottawa Centre has been dodging important questions on NDP policy, his leader has been tellingly silent.

Canadians want to know, where does the NDP stand, and who is in charge of its foreign policy? Is it the wishy-washy critic from Ottawa Centre, or the deputy leader, who in the past has denied Israel's right to exist?

It is indeed disturbing that the official opposition cannot answer basic policy questions, such as whether it believes Israel has a right to exist, and at a time when the NDP's big union bosses are down in Rio, participating in a radical hate-filled conference.

When will the leader of the NDP be clear with Canadians on where his party stands on this most recent unilateral action?

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**CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE**

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, atop the highest point in Guelph is one of its oldest and most beautiful buildings, Church of Our Lady Immaculate, which celebrates its 125th anniversary this year. In 1827, Guelph founder, John Alexander Galt, gave the hill in the centre of the town to Bishop Alexander Macdonell, for his advice on the formation of Galt's Canada Company. Upon that hill, from 1876-88, Joseph Connelly, one of Canada's most notable architects, built the Church of Our Lady Immaculate, a masterpiece of the Gothic Revival movement.

Since then, the Church of Our Lady Immaculate has not only remained the physical centre of Guelph and the home of a dedicated and vibrant Roman Catholic community, it is also an important social and cultural centre. The church endures as a symbol of the importance we in Guelph, and Canadians as a society, place on heritage and culture, by understanding where we are going through where we have been.

I am pleased to congratulate Church of Our Lady Immaculate on 125 years as a Guelph faith and cultural landmark, and I wish it centuries more.

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**NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in case you have not heard, the NDP leader's proposed carbon tax will raise the price of everything, from gas to groceries and electricity. This carbon tax plan is not simply a Christmas wish. In fact it was written in black and white on page four of its campaign documents.

If the NDP leader, Captain Carbon, has his way, Canadians will not wake up to Christmas joy, but instead to coal in their stockings on Christmas morning. The job-killing bah humbug carbon tax

would stall the economy and make it more difficult for Canadian families to make ends meet.

Our government will always stand up against that Christmas grinch's proposed carbon tax. This holiday season, Canadians can sleep tight knowing that our government remains focused on jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

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●(1415)

**CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I had a dream this weekend. Well, maybe it was a horrible nightmare. I dreamed I was a Conservative MP, stuck on the assembly line of misleading statements and being handed script after script by those kids in the Prime Minister's Office.

Then my nightmare went on. Conservatives have been raising fees on Canadians. Over the last six years, 47 billion dollars in user fees have been imposed on men, women and children. The Conservative fees were raised on birthdays, on Thanksgiving, even on Christmas. I cried out, "When will the Conservatives stop raising fees on everything"?

It was horrible. It made me realize how bad I feel for my colleagues across the way who have to repeat, over and over, so many misleading statements.

I feel for my Conservative colleagues, but there is a solution. Instead of standing and making things up, try standing and repeating the facts.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have some facts. Under our Conservative government, Canada is finally seeing real greenhouse gas emission reductions. In fact, Canada is now halfway toward its target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 17% from 2005 levels by 2020. That is a sharp contrast to the 27% increase in emissions that Canada saw under the Liberal government.

Not only is Canada realizing greenhouse gas emission reductions, but we are doing so without a job-killing carbon tax, like the NDP is proposing. While our motivation is achieving results on climate change, while ensuring our economy is protected, we know the NDP's motivation is \$21 billion in new revenue to feed its out-of-control spending habit.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last quarter, Canadian economic growth slowed to a rate of just six-tenths of one per cent. Conservatives have now missed their own economic growth targets three quarters in a row. They have had to downgrade their economic growth forecast for 2012 by nearly a third and it is now widely expected that the Bank of Canada will have to downgrade its own economic forecast as well.

The Minister of Finance announced new economic numbers just three weeks ago. Does the minister still stand by those numbers today, or will we have to downgrade his economic projections yet again?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not first stand and extend our congratulations to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the announcement coming from Clarence House earlier today.

This government presented an economic action plan designed to build on the hundreds of thousands of new jobs that were created in the country. Before the House today, we have a number of very important issues which are being debated, such as extending the job-creating credit for small business, something that has helped hundreds of thousands of Canadians. We are expanding tax relief for investment in clean energy, among many things. Let us get the NDP on board.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### EMPLOYMENT

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the truth is that there are now 350,000 more unemployed Canadians than there were before the recession.

These people spend an average of 16 weeks looking for work. Over the past six months, the private sector has not created one single net new job. Not a single net new job. That is the Conservative record.

In light of these facts, how can the Conservatives keep telling us that everything is fine and dandy?

• (1420)

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Since the end of the global recession, over 800,000 new jobs have been created in Canada. We are very proud of that.

Our government has put an economic action plan, a plan for economic growth, before the House. That is our goal.

To date, nearly 400,000 new jobs have been created. Since the beginning of the global recession, the good news is that economic growth is on the way, and we will continue to work very hard on that.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives cannot replace high-quality manufactur-

### Oral Questions

ing sector jobs with part-time McJobs and call it a win. Give me a break.

A CIBC study showed that disparities in Canada's labour market are making the country's economic situation worse. There are too many jobs without workers and too many workers without jobs. Those are not the NDP's facts. That comes from one of Canada's biggest banks.

When will the Conservatives realize that they have to focus on training unemployed Canadians rather than plug the gaps with temporary foreign workers?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have some good news for the leader of the NDP. Eight hundred and twenty thousand net new jobs have been created since the end of the recession. The better news is that 90% of those net new jobs are full-time jobs. That is a great start, but the job is not done. As long as there is one Canadian looking for work, the government will remain focused on job creation and economic growth.

When it comes to skills training, it is this government that has increased the transfers to provinces by 3% a year, something substantive and meaningful for job creation.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### FOREIGN INVESTMENT

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there are 350,000 more unemployed workers. Canadian families deserve better than that; that is for sure.

The Conservatives do not want to have any public debate on the trade agreement with China. They are refusing to hold any public consultation on the nationalization of our natural resources by a Chinese state-owned company, and they are unable to develop clear criteria. A serious government would consult experts, investors, and above all, the public. There are now seven days left.

When will the new rules be published and when will this government finally act responsibly?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians can count on a government that has a responsible approach. We are open to foreign investment as long as it provides a net benefit to Canada. On the other side of the House, the NDP has a radical and irresponsible anti-investment and anti-trade agenda.

Each transaction that is proposed in Canada is assessed on its merit based on what will bring the greatest benefit to Canadians and what will be in their best interests. This is the approach that we are going to continue to take.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, under a responsible NDP government, we will have clear criteria. We will consult Canadians because Canadians deserve better than what they are getting from the government. Incompetence, thy name is Conservative.

*Oral Questions*

We are seven days away from a final deadline on Nexen and there is still no criteria, no transparency and Canadians have been completely shut out. Billions are at stake and so is control of Canada's natural resources. Industry has no clue what is going on. Wall Street traders are confused. Share prices are falling fast. Therefore, where is the new criteria? When will the government do its work? When will it start to act responsibly?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the criteria proposed by the NDP members is no investment at all, no trade at all, no progress at all in terms of the economy. They propose a carbon tax of \$21.5 billion on the shoulders of Canadians. It would be a job-killing tax. They want to tax everything. They want to raise taxes everywhere. That is not responsible.

We welcome foreign investment that provides net benefit for Canada. Each transaction is reviewed under its own merit.

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**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing we do know is that with slower growth, inequality is only going to be increasing in the country. It poses a very serious challenge, particularly to those who are disabled.

I have a very simple question for the government. The government has a disability tax credit, but it only applies to those people who are disabled and who have an income. Would the government consider making this income tax credit refundable?

• (1425)

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has taken substantial efforts to encourage economic growth and substantial efforts to help those Canadians with a disability.

For example, just with respect to inequality, this government has an EI hiring tax credit, the third quarter project, a youth employment strategy, an apprenticeship incentive grant. The Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development has a substantial amount of work going on. A report on Canadians with disabilities will be coming to her in very short order. We are certainly prepared to continuously do more to help Canadians with disabilities.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing we know is that, with a significant slowdown in economic growth, inequality in our society is only going to get worse. This is a growing problem.

Once again, I am asking the minister the question that he did not answer: why not make tax credits for people with disabilities refundable?

[*English*]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has taken substantial initiatives to help all Canadians who seek employment. We are particularly concerned, obviously, by those Canadians who are disabled and have trouble seeking employment. That is why this government has brought in a

series of initiatives to try to specifically address the needs of Canadians with a disability.

As I said, my colleague, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, has a report coming very shortly, which will outline even more advice to the government of what more we can do to help Canadians with a disability. We are going to continue to do even more.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a very simple fact that most of the tax credits that the government has introduced for all kinds of things, for sports equipment, piano lessons, whatever it may be, do not apply, are not refundable for people who do not have taxable income. There are millions of people who do not have taxable income, 9 million families.

Why not make these tax credits refundable? In particular, why not make the tax credits refundable for those people with disabilities? It is a very simple and basic change and a very simple question.

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has brought forward a substantial number of tax reductions that help all Canadians, including those Canadians with a disability.

Just before Parliament we have measures to improve registered disability savings plans. The Liberals are trying to delay those initiatives from being tackled. This government has brought forward the working income tax benefits. This government has brought forward substantial tax reductions. This government cuts taxes for Canadians who pay taxes, and that is, I guess, a fundamental difference from the Liberal Party.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to combatting climate change, developing countries need financial help from richer countries to meet their commitments. Canada has the worst record in this regard.

While Canada heads to Doha empty-handed, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reached record highs last year. Without an effective national policy, there will be no international treaty.

Do the Conservatives recognize the urgency of taking action both here in Canada and abroad?

[*English*]

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when Canadians wake up in the morning they switch on their lights to electricity that is produced from some of the cleanest sources in the world and under regulations that regulate coal-fired plants. They also drive vehicles that will be 50% more efficient than they were when our government took office.

Under our government, even though Canada only produces 2% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, we have seen a stabilization and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for the first time ever. This is our government's track record on climate change.



*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, being ranked last in the developed world is nothing to be proud of. It is our children who are going to pay the biggest price for Conservative inaction.

The head of the climate talks had a clear message for those who think it is a problem they can put off: “The door is closing fast on us because the pace and the scale of action is simply not yet where it must be”.

Exactly how much of the Arctic melting will it take before the Conservatives stop stalling?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government's track record with regard to international talks has been to encourage an agreement where all major emitters come to the table. We need to make sure that emitters like China, India and Brazil come to the table so that we do not have an agreement where only 13% of the world's emissions are covered.

We have also contributed hundreds of millions of dollars, which are seeing increased soil fertility, food security and reforestation in vulnerable countries. Canada is a world leader on the global stage when it comes to climate change.

\* \* \*

• (1430)

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' track record is one of dumping the environmental deficit on future generations and dismantling social programs.

The new social security tribunal will double the wait times for appeals, and there will be no guarantee that an appeal will be heard. The Conservatives have systematically reduced access to programs, and they are now doing the same thing with appeal mechanisms. Why discourage unemployed workers from appealing, if not to force them to move and accept a lower wage?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this new tribunal will hear appeals more quickly and efficiently than before. That is why we created it.

We have to wonder whether the hon. member is loyal to Canada or to separatists, because she made donations to the Québec solidaire party. Is she fighting for or against Canadians?

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member made a \$100 donation to Éline Hémond, who encouraged women to become involved in politics.

We will always vote against the dismantling of social programs—unlike the members opposite—and against unfair budgets that target unemployed workers and deprive people of their rights. The question is not only whether the system is more complicated, but also whether it takes rights away from the unemployed. An in-person hearing is essential to ensure that the ruling is fair. However, the new tribunal

will be able to reject an appeal without having to provide an explanation.

Why is this government violating the rights of unemployed workers?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member complains that the current system is too slow. We are trying to speed this system up so that unemployed workers can get fair and equitable decisions more quickly. That is what we will do.

Why is she opposed to that?

[English]

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister could write an entire manual on how not to reform a government program. Instead of a simpler, fairer process, we get a more complex and less transparent EI appeals process. The Conservatives' new social security tribunal will now have the power to summarily dismiss appeals.

How can one fairly rule on an appeal before one has even heard from the person? Why is the minister turning the EI appeals process into a kangaroo court?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the current system just is not working as well as it should for Canadians. It takes too long, it is too cumbersome and too burdensome, and there are replications and duplications. That is not what Canadians deserve. They deserve a fast, efficient, responsive appeal system. That is what we are introducing. It is one that will meet the needs of Canadians much better.

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a fair process is precisely what they are not getting from the government. The Conservatives tell the unemployed to take any job at any salary or lose their benefits. They claw back benefits from part-time workers who find just a day or two of work each week and they introduce an appeals process that is twice as long and takes away a person's right to defend themselves.

Why are the Conservatives denying benefits to the very people who have paid for them? Why are they targeting the unemployed?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our target is to help the unemployed get a new job, one that will pay them more than employment insurance and not working. We want to help Canadians get the skills and training they need so they can take better advantage of the opportunities that are being created right across this great country. Over 800,000 net new jobs have been created. We want to do even more and help those who are unemployed get jobs so they and their families will be better off. Why does the NDP keep opposing these measures?

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**41ST GENERAL ELECTION**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals dipped into the employment insurance fund. Now the Conservatives are trying to kill the program all together. That hurts Canadian families.

The Conservatives would have us believe that the electoral fraud happened only in the riding of Guelph, when in fact, no less than 55 other ridings are currently under investigation: 20 in British Columbia, 14 in the Prairies and 20 in Quebec, and that number continues to rise.

The Conservatives voted in favour of our motion to give the commissioner more powers and they promised to make changes, but nothing has been done since.

When will the Conservatives take electoral fraud seriously?

•(1435)

[English]

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a comprehensive proposal from the government will be forthcoming shortly.

The fact is that the Federal Accountability Act passed through the House in 2006. In that act we eliminated any donations by corporations and unions, and yet knowing that the NDP still accepted thousands of dollars in illegal donations from unions.

The real question is, can it follow the law?

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but we are talking about an investigation into voter fraud. I do not know if the member understands that. Maybe he does not understand that 56 ridings are now being investigated. The Conservatives' claims that they are co-operating do not add up because we have found out that Conservative Party lawyers delayed responding to Elections Canada for 90 days. That is not co-operation; it is called stalling for time.

Since the numbers have been traced back to the Conservative Party's headquarters, when is the government going to get serious about holding itself to account? Whom are the Conservatives covering up for?

**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, we have said all along that we are working proactively with Elections Canada to find out exactly what went on in the riding of Guelph.

That is in stark contrast to the approach of the NDP when it accepted \$340,000 in illegal union money. That party did not co-operate with Elections Canada or anyone else. That party tried to cover it up so that Canadians would not find out. Canadians did find out and the NDP will be held accountable by the Canadian people.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member needs to update his Rolodex of sleazy excuses.

The Conservatives claim that the issue in Guelph involved one kid. We are talking about 56 ridings and the fact that they refuse to answer to Elections Canada.

Speaking of that, the Labrador minister has refused to come clean about his breaking of election laws. He has refused to explain why he hid free flights and refused to explain why he and his campaign manager were promoted by the Prime Minister after they broke the rules.

Since it has worked out so well for him, I would like to ask the member for Labrador, does he take the issue of election crime seriously, yes or no?

**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, of course he does. I think all Canadians take it seriously when they learn that a political party has taken \$340,000 in illegal union money.

On this side of the House we have a member of Parliament for Labrador who is working hard to defend the interests of the people he represents and working to create jobs in his community. What does the opposition do? It attacks him for spending too much time in his community and making too much of an effort creating jobs for his constituents. Those are the kind of attacks that we can live with.

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Conservative financial incompetence has ballooned Canada's national debt to more than \$600 billion, but it is Canadians who are being punished. Nowhere is this more evident than in first nations education.

Despite the insulting assertion of the minister, the chiefs know that funding for each student attending reserve schools is less than half of that for students off reserve. They want action for their youth, who have the lowest educational outcomes in this country.

Why is the minister making first nation students pay the price for the government's financial incompetence? When will he close the gap?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every year we invest in education for over 117,000 students on reserve. Recently I announced additional measures, such as early literacy programming to further education outcomes. I also made announcements in regard to new school infrastructure.

We have already completed 263 school projects, including 33 new schools. We are continuing to take concrete steps to improve educational outcomes for first nation students.

*Oral Questions***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are being punished with cuts to core services to pay for Conservative financial incompetence. That is being seen as Canada's national debt rises to over \$600 billion.

Closures of immigration offices across Canada and in Buffalo have left people asking questions they cannot get answered. The CIC website barely provides updates on increases in processing times but is a virtual black hole when it comes to updates on personal files.

When will the minister reinstate these services and make the necessary changes, instead of leaving people in the dark?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member has it absolutely wrong. Our new central processing office in Ottawa is processing applications more quickly than they were in Buffalo.

This is astonishing, coming from the Liberals. The Liberal immigration legacy left us with wait times of eight and nine years across the entire range of programs. There was a million people waiting in the backlog.

Thanks to strong action taken by the government, opposed consistently by the Liberals, we are now getting to a just-in-time system that is going from seven and eight year wait times to one year processing times for applicants for immigration.

\* \* \*

● (1440)

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development plans to eliminate 46% of jobs in Service Canada offices in Prince Edward Island.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs plans to close our only district office and eliminate 800 jobs.

The Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism has already closed our only Citizenship and Immigration Canada office.

The Minister of National Revenue closed our only consultation office, where people could go in person.

Why is Prince Edward Island being punished for the Conservatives' financial incompetence?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary. Yes, it is true that, as part of our efforts to reduce operating expenses in order to reduce the deficit, we have decreased the number of offices. However, we have increased our online services in order to meet people's needs much more efficiently.

The Liberals' immigration policy forced permanent resident applicants to wait up to eight years for a response. We are moving to a just in time system that will process new applications for permanent residence in one year or less. Those are the kinds of results our government is achieving.

**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-398 proposed simple changes to Canadian legislation, which could have saved thousands of lives at no cost to taxpayers. A number of Conservative members caved in to pressure from the Prime Minister's Office and refused to send the bill to be examined in committee, even though a similar bill was passed by the House in the last Parliament.

Why did they vote against streamlining the system, thereby refusing to save lives?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not true. The bill would not improve the lives of the people it purported to help. The real question is this: why did the NDP vote against \$4 billion in initiatives that would have provided medications to countries in need?

The NDP always voted against those initiatives. The \$4 billion would have secured a global fund of \$10 billion. Those are real initiatives, not just rhetoric. That is real action. Shame on the NDP for voting against them.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that sounds like more hollow excuses.

Conservatives could have acted. They could have agreed with those around the world who believe that we have a responsibility to act. Even the *Toronto Sun* lamented the cruel death of this lifesaving bill. Forty-four percent of women, men and children living in sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to lifesaving medicines.

Why will the Conservatives not put partisan games aside and work together with everyone to ensure that we get lifesaving medicines to the people who need them?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not true. This bill would not help the ones that it claims to. The fact is that we put forward \$4 billion of initiatives to make sure that medicines are provided to the countries in need, and the NDP always voted against it. The question is why it votes against it when we know that this \$4 billion helped to secure a global fund of \$10 billion for the countries in need. This is real action, and shame on New Democrats for voting against that.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are failing yet again to show leadership in health care, and Canadians are paying the price. The Canadian Institute for Health Information reported that Canada has the highest percentage of people waiting more than four hours in emergency rooms, and more than half of Canadians say they cannot get appointments with their family doctors when they need them.

Why is the Minister of Health cutting billions of dollars from health transfers rather than working with the provinces to reduce wait times, which is a significant issue in this country?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is absolutely playing a leadership role when it comes to health care. I appreciate the hon. member's question because it gives me an opportunity to talk about all the great investments our government is making. Transfers to the provinces and territories are at record levels and will increase to approximately \$40 billion per year by the end of the decade—

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

• (1445)

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. Minister of Health has the floor.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Mr. Speaker, they are the ones who cut the transfers.

We are also funding more than 10,000 health research projects across the country. We have introduced debt forgiveness programs for doctors and nurses who work in rural and remote areas. The opposition talks a good game, but our government is taking concrete actions.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a recent poll indicated that Canadians care about Tommy Douglas's legacy and the universal health care system. That is a Canadian value.

But leadership is also required to maintain a health care system capable of meeting Canadians' needs. Reducing provincial transfers is not leadership.

When will the Conservatives provide the resources the provinces need to do their job?

[*English*]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, transfers to the provinces and territories have increased to \$40 billion by the end of the decade.

It also gives me an opportunity to talk about more investments we are making. We have created the Mental Health Commission of Canada; we have made significant investments in food safety; we funded the creation of medical residents positions; we fund national organizations like the Canadian Institute for Health Information and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. The list goes on.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, union bosses from CUPW want taxpayers to cover their trip to an anti-Israel conference in Brazil, which advocated the release of Ahmad Sa'adat. Sa'adat heads a banned terrorist group called the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Public Safety Canada says this group "took part in some of the boldest terrorist attacks", hijacking three civilian airliners and using suicide bombers and guerrilla tactics.

Sa'adat is imprisoned right now for 30 years for ordering the assassination of an Israeli minister. Does the government still consider Ahmad Sa'adat's PFLP to be a terrorist organization?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Yes, we do, Mr. Speaker. Convicted murderer and terrorist Ahmad Sa'adat wrote a jailhouse letter thanking conference goers, including the Canadian postal union bosses. Now union bosses plan to use workers' dues to file a grievance because Canada Post refuses to fund the trip to the freedom-for-terrorists conference. Here we have the latest example of union bosses using other people's money to lavish themselves and to fund the most odious of causes. Is it not time for union financial transparency?

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in 2008, the Prime Minister promised aboriginal peoples and all Canadians that reconciliation was at the heart of the historical apology to survivors of residential schools, but it was all empty words. Years of mounting frustration over access to government records has prompted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, just like the Parliamentary Budget Officer, to turn to the courts for help because the government is blocking it.

The right to use these documents is a vital part of the truth and reconciliation process. Who is holding up the release of these documents?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my department is working with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and 22 other departments to ensure that all relevant documents are made available. To date, almost one million have been disclosed, and it is our aim to have the remaining disclosed in 2013.

Our government remains committed to bringing closure to the legacy of residential schools, and we will continue to honour the agreement.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to fulfill its mandate of healing and reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada must have access to the documentation. The fact that the commission had to go to court to get the documents it needs goes against the principle behind the apology made in the House.

The commission may not be able to complete its work on time and within the budget it was given.

Do the Conservatives really want to get to the bottom of what happened in the Indian residential schools?

[English]

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have already turned over a million documents. We are working with 22 other departments.

This is a court-supervised process. It involves the churches. It involves all of the other stakeholders, and it involves 22 departments. We are working with all of them, and we are doing our very best to make sure this process is completed in 2013.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Conservative mismanagement has meant that some people are just being left behind.

On Friday, the minister held a news conference and used strong language about Hungary's treatment of the Roma. He spoke of "crazy and hateful xenophobic nutbars". Yet he is planning to declare Hungary a safe country.

The minister loves to talk about bogus refugees from countries like the EU and Hungary, but will the minister now admit that his plans are flawed and he could be rejecting legitimate refugees?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure we join with all members of this place in condemning the attitudes and actions of organizations like Jobbik and the Magyar Garda in Hungary.

As it relates to the designated country list for our new fast and fair asylum system, that has not yet been fully determined or published.

I can point out, however, that it is peculiar that the European Union is the number one source region for asylum claims to Canada, that Canada gets 98% of Hungarian asylum claims filed worldwide and that about 95% of those claims are abandoned or withdrawn by the claimants themselves or subsequently rejected by our fair and generous Immigration and Refugee Board.

We are here to provide real protection to real refugees, but to discourage false claims.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism has done an about-face with regard to the

statements he made about Hungary, he can no longer ignore the chaos that has reigned since the Buffalo visa office was closed. Some people have been waiting for over two years for news about the status of their application for permanent residence. The minister says that applications are being processed in Ottawa.

Can the minister tell us how much longer it will take for these applications to be processed and exactly how many people are affected?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my answer does not have to do specifically with the program, but I can tell the hon. member that we expect that most of the files that were transferred from Buffalo will be processed within a few months. In fact, in most areas of immigration, new applications submitted to Ottawa are being processed more quickly than they would have been during the same period last year in Buffalo. For example, applications from Quebec-selected skilled workers are being processed in nine months at the new Ottawa office as compared to the 15 months it would have taken the Buffalo office.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as countries gather at the UN climate conference in Doha, Canada has already won two fossil awards, because the government has undermined global efforts to address climate change.

This week, Canada ranked 58 out of 61 countries on climate policy, trailed only by Kazakhstan, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Canadian is listed as the worst performer in the developed world. When will the minister and his failed sector-by-sector approach take real action on climate change and end the international humiliation?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has no basis to even talk to this issue when all it has had with regard to climate change policy is a 30% increase in greenhouse gas emissions, a \$15 billion carbon tax and a dog named Kyoto.

When we compare that with our track record, we are seeing a stabilization of greenhouse gas emission growth and we have also seen our economy grow. We are getting it done.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 15 years ago today, world leaders, MPs and NGOs gathered here in Ottawa to sign the Ottawa treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines, which unanimously passed. Since then, Canada has been one of the leading funders for the removal effort. However, under the Conservative government, the funding for the landmine clearance has been cut.

### Oral Questions

Canada has gone from being in the top five to, now, number ten. Will the government commit to renew funding for the landmines clearance and return Canada to a leadership role?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians can be very proud of the role our government played in the Ottawa treaty. Lloyd Axworthy, one of my predecessors, as a distinguished foreign minister, worked very hard on this issue. Canada continues to be a top 10 funder of this.

Canada also has other priorities and other challenges that it seeks to tackle, particularly the Prime Minister's leadership on maternal health. It is something that Canadians can be equally excited about, the international leadership that has been shown by another Government of Canada.

\* \* \*

• (1455)

[Translation]

### PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. We represent 15% of Canadians.

In 2010, the government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The agreement stated that in April 2012 a report would be submitted on steps taken to improve the living conditions of Canadians with disabilities. Eight months later, the Conservatives still have not fulfilled their obligations.

Where is the report? When will it be tabled? This time, I hope I get a real answer.

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, no government has done as much as we have to help those with disabilities.

For instance, we set up the RDSP to help families save for the future. We have also asked for a report, which I expect to receive very soon, on how to help people with disabilities enter Canada's labour market.

We want to help these people, that is what we are doing and we want the NDP's support.

[English]

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us look at their record instead. Conservatives have refused to adequately fund the public service disability insurance plan and they used the enabling accessibility fund almost exclusively for Conservative ridings, refusing other worthy projects.

On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, it is clear Conservatives have failed to support Canadians with disabilities. When will the government keep its international promises and get behind fair and balanced programs?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been doing exactly that, and at every single step of the way the NDP has opposed that action. It has opposed the working income tax benefit. It opposed the enabling accessibility fund that has benefited over 800 new projects that have increased accessibility for all persons within Canada. It

even opposed the opportunities fund, which helps Canadians with disabilities prepare for the workplace, to get out there and become more self-reliant and independent.

We are the ones working to help people with disabilities become included in society. It is too bad the NDP opposes us every step of the way.

\* \* \*

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is focused on the economy, and we are getting results, with over 820,000 net new jobs created since July 2009. We are getting those results through low taxes, cutting taxes over 140 times and lowering the tax bill for Canadian families by over \$3,100 a year. We are also leaving more money in the hands of entrepreneurs to grow and create more jobs.

Today, PricewaterhouseCoopers released a new report confirming we are on the right track. Could the Minister of State for Finance tell the House what the report had to say?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Chatham-Kent—Essex for his question. That is accurate. PricewaterhouseCoopers today confirmed that, due to our government's actions, Canada has one of the best tax systems to help businesses create jobs. In fact, we have moved up three spots. We now rank in the top 10, earning high praise for low taxes and less red tape.

Let me quote from that report. It states that Canada has “attractive tax regimes, which impact all companies—in particular small-medium sized domestic companies”.

\* \* \*

### TRANSPORT

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from grain to lumber, from chemicals to cars, captive shippers have been asking for legislation since 2007 to provide enforceable level of service contracts. After five years, will we finally see that legislation this week?

Without discrimination, will all level of service contracts include six mandatory elements: services and obligations, communication rules, performance standards, performance metrics, consequences for non-performance, and a dispute settlement mechanism? Will we get that legislation this week?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to hear that from a member who has been here for 13 years before and had done absolutely nothing.

We will fix it. We said that we would introduce a bill during the fall and we will do it.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Emerson report confirms what many people already knew. The Conservatives are not doing enough for Canada's aerospace industry. Our industry is even falling behind. Tomorrow, the Conservatives will be passing a massive budget bill in which they cut research and development tax credits just when the industry needs them the most. This makes no sense.

Other governments are fighting for their industry. Why are the Conservatives sitting back and doing nothing rather than protecting jobs that belong to Canadians?

● (1500)

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, David Emerson tabled his report last week, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his excellent work.

This is important because we have an excellent aerospace industry. Our industry ranks fifth in the world, but we must not rest on our laurels. Our government has a vision, and we need the expertise of outside consultants to know where we will be in 5, 10, 15 or 20 years. Right now, Canada is the best place to invest, and Canada is the country with the best corporate tax system.

We want to continue to lead in the aerospace industry, and we hope that the NDP will support us in our endeavours, for once.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the Liberals, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions increased by a whopping 27%. In the words of the former Liberal leader, "We didn't get it done".

On the other hand, we have the NDP that has already told Canadians that it would implement a \$21 billion job killing, tax on everything carbon tax.

Would the parliamentary secretary update this House on the outcome and accomplishments of this government's climate change efforts to date?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government's record when it comes climate change is that we are over halfway to achieving our Copenhagen target in 2020. Our greenhouse gas emissions in this country have stabilized. We are working with vulnerable countries to come up with climate change adaptation measures. We are working with communities in the north to build strong infrastructure to respond to climate change. We are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in climate change research. Our government is getting it done.

[Translation]

**CANADIAN HERITAGE**

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if it were up to the Conservatives, Canadians would know nothing about Luc Plamondon and André Gagnon. These artists, influential pillars of the Quebec cultural scene, do not exist on the Library and Archives Canada site. Although the Conservatives would have us believe that budget cuts have no impact, this situation is a sad reminder that this is not true.

When I asked the minister about putting the brakes on cuts to Library and Archives Canada last week, he replied that his choices enhance access to content. What content? Content that does not exist? Will he stop taking us for fools and put an end to these ideological cuts?

[English]

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague may not believe our record when it comes to arts and culture but here is who does.

This is what Joe Rotman, chair of the Canada Council for the Arts, said about the budget that we will be voting on this year. He said, "This government clearly appreciates the positive contribution the arts have to the economy and the identity of this country".

The member may not think that I am perhaps the best spokesperson for the arts but here is who does. Simon Brault, president of Culture Montreal, said, "Funding for the Canada Council of the Arts will remain intact and we owe a debt of gratitude to this government for listening to artists".

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while the government was preparing to announce its unfair funding for the Lower Churchill project, the Quebec National Assembly unanimously reiterated its opposition to federal assistance. The Bloc Québécois was the only party in the House to condemn the great unfairness of Ottawa using Quebecers' money to support projects that are counter to their economic interests and that will compete directly with Hydro-Québec, a government entity that the Quebec nation built itself.

How can this government, with the support of the Liberals and the NDP, have such disregard for the interests of Quebec?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a loan guarantee is not an allocation of taxpayers' money; it is the use of our credit rating, which reflects the government's strong financial performance. Last week, during my telephone conversation with Quebec's natural resources minister, Martine Ouellet, I reminded her that the federal government is prepared to support other major regional or Canadian projects that are economically viable and that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

*Routine Proceedings*

• (1505)  
[English]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs said “that the member was not factual and has given a false report”.

I wrote to the minister on September 20 and I got a response back that said “quiet diplomacy”. I wrote to the minister on October 4 and again on November 8.

I wrote to the minister not twice but three times.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during question period I witnessed the member for Mississauga—Streetsville make a gesture in the House that is truly unacceptable.

After the last question by the member of Toronto Centre, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville used his hand by forming a gun and putting the trigger to his head.

As you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, many families have had some of their loved ones fall victim to gun-related crimes and suicide. Such gestures have no place in the House of Commons.

I respectfully ask that the member for Mississauga—Streetsville apologize to the member for Toronto Centre and to the House.

**The Speaker:** Perhaps the member will come back to that. I do not think the member is here right now.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

**The Speaker:** It is my duty, pursuant to section 21 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, to lay upon the table a certified copy of the report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the province of Manitoba.

[Translation]

This report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

\* \* \*

[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 response to 31 petitions.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to the orders of the day.

**The Speaker:** 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 yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1545)

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

(Division No. 521)

**YEAS**

## Members

Adams	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Daniel
Davidson	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Flaherty	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Holder	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield



Miller  
 Moore (Fundy Royal)  
 Norlock  
 O'Connor  
 O'Neill Gordon  
 Paradis  
 Penashue  
 Preston  
 Rajotte  
 Reid  
 Richards  
 Ritz  
 Schellenberger  
 Shea  
 Shory  
 Sopuck  
 Stanton  
 Strahl  
 Tilson  
 Toews  
 Truppe  
 Uppal  
 Van Kesteren  
 Wallace  
 Warkentin  
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)  
 Weston (Saint John)  
 Wilks  
 Wong  
 Yelich  
 Young (Vancouver South)

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
 Nicholson  
 Obhrai  
 Oliver  
 Opitz  
 Payne  
 Poilievre  
 Raitt  
 Rathgeber  
 Rempel  
 Rickford  
 Saxton  
 Seebach  
 Shipley  
 Smith  
 Sorenson  
 Storseth  
 Sweet  
 Toet  
 Trottier  
 Tweed  
 Valcourt  
 Van Loan  
 Warawa  
 Watson  
 Williamson  
 Woodworth  
 Young (Oakville)  
 Zimmer— 154

## NAYS

### Members

Allen (Welland)  
 Angus  
 Ayala  
 Bennett  
 Blanchette  
 Boivin  
 Boutin-Sweet  
 Brosseau  
 Caron  
 Cash  
 Chicoine  
 Chow  
 Coderre  
 Côté  
 Cullen  
 Day  
 Dion  
 Donnelly  
 Dubé  
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)  
 Eyking  
 Freeman  
 Garneau  
 Genest  
 Giguère  
 Gravelle  
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)  
 Hassainia  
 Hughes  
 Julian  
 Kellway  
 Lapointe  
 Latendresse  
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)  
 Leslie  
 MacAulay  
 Marston  
 May  
 McGuinty  
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)  
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)  
 Mulcair  
 Nantel  
 Nicholls  
 Papillon  
 Pécelet  
 Pilon  
 Quach

Andrews  
 Aubin  
 Bélanger  
 Bevington  
 Blanchette-Lamothe  
 Boulerville  
 Brahma  
 Byrne  
 Casey  
 Charlton  
 Chisholm  
 Christopherson  
 Comartin  
 Crowder  
 Davies (Vancouver East)  
 Dewar  
 Dionne Labelle  
 Doré Lefebvre  
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
 Dusseault  
 Foote  
 Fry  
 Garrison  
 Genest-Jourdain  
 Goodale  
 Grogulé  
 Harris (St. John's East)  
 Hsu  
 Jacob  
 Karygiannis  
 Lamoureux  
 Larose  
 Laverdière  
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)  
 Liu  
 Mai  
 Mathysen  
 McCallum  
 Michaud  
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)  
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)  
 Murray  
 Nash  
 Nunez-Melo  
 Patry  
 Perreault  
 Plamondon  
 Rafferty

## Government Orders

Raynault  
 Scarpaleggia  
 Sellah  
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)  
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)  
 Sitsabaesan  
 Stoffer  
 Thibeault  
 Tremblay  
 Valeriote— 113

Rousseau  
 Scott  
 Sgro  
 St-Denis  
 Sullivan  
 Toone  
 Turmel

PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2012

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-45, A second 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 Speaker:** The hon. member for Mississauga South has six minutes remaining to conclude her remarks.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, before question period, I started talking about the benefits in the economic action plan 2012 for small businesses. Next I would like to focus on the benefits for families and seniors.

For the most part, it is about our promise to keep taxes low. Unlike the high tax NDP and Liberals, our Conservative government believes in low taxes and leaving more money where it belongs, in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families. That is why we have cut taxes over 140 times since 2006, reducing the overall tax burden to its lowest level in nearly 50 years.

We have removed over one million low-income families, individuals and seniors from the tax rolls altogether. We have cut taxes in every way government collects them: personal taxes, consumption taxes, business taxes and more. This includes cutting the lowest personal income tax rate to 15%, increasing the amount Canadians can earn tax free, providing seniors with pension income-splitting, reducing the GST from 7% to 5%, putting nearly \$1,000 back in the pockets of an average family.

We have also introduced the children's fitness tax credit and the children's arts tax credit, as well as the universal child care benefit offering families more choice in child care by providing \$1,200 a year for each child under the age of six. We introduced the child tax credit providing personal income tax relief of up to \$320 in 2011 for each child under age 18. This Conservative government's low tax record has provided tax savings for a typical Canadian family totalling over \$3,100.

*Government Orders*

Also in order to help families, we are improving the registered disability savings plan to help ensure long-term financial security of children with severe disabilities. We introduced the family caregiver tax credit, a credit of up to \$2,000 for caregivers of all types to infirm, dependent relatives, including spouses, common-law partners and minor children.

We are investing in small public infrastructure with \$150 million to support repairs and improvements to existing community structures. This includes investments in my community, including the Clarkson Community Centre Pool, the Lions Club of Credit Valley Outdoor Pool, David Ramsey Outdoor Pool, Lewis Bradley Pool, as well as the Lakeview and Lorne Park public libraries. Thousands of children, their parents, students and seniors in Mississauga South use these pools and libraries every day.

With regard specifically to supporting seniors, our Conservative government recognizes that Canada's seniors helped build and make our country great. That is why economic action plan 2012 introduces new measures to improve the quality of life and expand opportunities for Canadian seniors, including the Third Quarter project, an innovative online approach to help employers find experienced workers over age 50 who want to keep using their skills in the workforce, improving flexibility and choice for senior workers.

For those who do wish to work longer, economic action plan 2012 provides the option to voluntarily defer take-up of old age security benefits. Those doing so will subsequently receive a higher annual actuarially adjusted pension on take-up. This builds on top of the tax relief our government has already provided to seniors and pensioners since 2006, including removing over 380,000 seniors from the tax roll, again, introducing pension income-splitting, increasing the age credit amount by \$2,000, doubling the pension income credit to \$2,000, increasing the age limit for RRSP to RRIF conversion from age 71 to 69, establishing the tax-free savings account, which is particularly beneficial for seniors, and introducing the largest GIS increase in over 25 years, helping more than 680,000 seniors across Canada.

I am also proud that we have taken steps to combat elder abuse in all its forms, including abuse awareness activities through the new horizons for seniors program and introducing legislation in March of this year to ensure tougher sentences for those who abuse seniors.

I was proud to serve on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women where our review and study of elder abuse did make this recommendation to the government for tougher sentences for those who abused our most vulnerable senior citizens.

Let me reiterate that Canada is leading the global economic recovery. Our Conservative government is squarely focused on the economy and jobs. In fact, Canada has created over 820,000 net new jobs since July 2009. Canada has, by far, the best rate of job growth in the entire G7 and has had that since 2006. Canada's unemployment rate is significantly lower than that of the U.S., a phenomenon that has not been seen in nearly three decades.

● (1550)

However, the global recovery remains fragile and we must secure Canada's recovery. While the NDP and the Liberals want to engage

in a reckless spending spree, and maybe even a \$21 billion carbon tax, our Conservative government is committed to returning to balanced budgets.

Budget 2012 focuses on jobs and economic growth, ensuring that Canada's small businesses, and families and seniors are our top priorities. I would encourage all members to support this jobs and growth bill, our second budget implementation act, and vote for Canada's economic plan 2012.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by the hon. member for Mississauga South.

As I demonstrated earlier with a very simple example, the Conservative government is completely incompetent when it comes to our economy, considering the staggering \$550 billion in capital that Canadian businesses are hanging on to. This is a sign that entrepreneurs and business leaders do not have confidence in the future. They are refusing to invest their money, and who could blame them? If anyone is to blame, it is those responsible for this poor economic climate.

The fiscal imbalance, which is now huge, is another problem this government is responsible for. Approximately 80% of the tax burden falls entirely on the shoulders of individuals, while large corporations are enjoying tax breaks.

So I have a question for the member. Just how far will the government go to get out of having to support people and abandon them to their fate?

● (1555)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder what Canadians would think if the opposition were the Government of Canada, whether they would even remotely consider investing in Canadian businesses if the NDP had its way and its high-tax agenda were implemented. Frankly, I think Canadian businesses are frightened of that prospect. They are frightened of the fact that the NDP is anti-investment and anti-trade.

Canadians deserve better than this radical opposition. Unlike the NDP, our Conservative government will not raise taxes or slash transfers to the provinces. In fact, just today PricewaterhouseCoopers said that Canada has one of the best tax systems, including for small to medium-size businesses to thrive. That is what the experts are saying. That is the confidence that Canadians businesses have in this government and how we are helping them.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Mississauga South, knowing how dedicated she is to her constituents, particularly the families in her area. She has a young family herself. I know how important the services and other items are to both her family and constituents.

One of the things this budget really focuses on is small businesses. I know that in the member's riding of Mississauga South there are a number of small businesses, all of which are delighted with the direction this budget is taking and how it is going to help them become even more prosperous and to create even more jobs.

I wonder if the member could comment on the impact of this budget on small businesses in her riding of Mississauga South.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Speaker, I know that the member for Simcoe—Grey supports small businesses and families in her riding as well. I very much appreciate her question and the opportunity to talk about how this budget helps small businesses.

In particular, I have heard many businesses talk about how the reducing red tape initiative will be helpful to them. When businesses are spending time doing that, they are not being productive and growing as businesses.

We are also expanding trade around the world, which helps small businesses. I talked about the example of Electrovaya in my community, which makes lithium ion batteries and is contributing to energy efficient green technology.

Most of all, I think that small businesses in Mississauga South and across Canada appreciate the hiring tax credit. It is very unfortunate that the NDP voted against this very worthwhile initiative.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and address the House this afternoon on the important reforms our government is making in budget 2012. Economic action plan 2012 is focused on what matters most to Albertans and all Canadians, building the right conditions for prosperity today and generations to come.

I want to highlight aspects of Bill C-45, the second budget implementation bill, that support research, create jobs and promote clean energy. Not only do these initiatives advance innovation in Canada and play a key role in achieving the priorities outlined in the economic action plan but they are also critical to who we are as Albertans and Canadians.

We know well that economic prosperity is not a given. It is the fruit of hard work and tremendous imagination. Investing in our students, entrepreneurs and researchers is our strongest guarantee that Canada's future will be bright, that we will break the confining limits of the past and open new opportunities for a long and prosperous future. Indeed, the OECD predicts that Canada's economy will lead the developed world for the next half century.

Since 2006, we have taken concrete steps to make sure that Canada is a global leader in research and innovation, and have invested nearly \$8 billion in new funding for initiatives to support science, technology and the growth of innovation firms in Canada, including \$5 billion for advanced research, education and training;

\$2 billion for post-secondary infrastructure; and \$1 billion for applied research and financing.

For instance, budget 2012 directs \$71 million over four years to further establish the Canada excellence research chairs to attract the world's best researchers to Canada, and over \$600 million to support cutting-edge research throughout Canada via the Canada Foundation for Innovation. I am proud to say that the University of Alberta has been awarded more research chairs than any other institution in Canada.

We are confident that our government's support for research commercialization will help bridge the gap between Canadian innovations and the ability to bring these ideas to market. For instance, our economic action plan proposes \$440 million to create centres of excellence for commercialization and research to help transform great ideas into concrete success in the Canadian marketplace.

Economic action plan 2012 also targets \$470 million over four years to support strategic innovation projects in key sectors of the Canadian economy, including the automotive, aerospace, forestry and clean technology sectors.

Investing in Canadian research and innovation is not only fundamental to developing a robust competitive global economy; investing in innovation is not only about creating jobs and generating economic prosperity, though it does that too, but it is also the case that investing in great minds and pioneering approaches to science and technology affects every aspect of daily life in Canada. I will provide an example.

Marquis, a wheat variety developed at the sunset of the 19th century in Indian Head, Saskatchewan, led to an explosion of cereal production in Canada. The ingenuity of crossing two kinds of wheat to develop a grain that could thrive in prairie climates resulted in a wave felt in communities across the Prairies.

Great Canadian innovations have shaped the course of our history from Marquis wheat to insulin in the 1920s, the snowmobile and the electron microscope in the 1930s, canola in the 1940s, Research in Motion's BlackBerry in the 1990s, and the countless universities and businesses across Canada that are on the leading edge of research today.

While the private sector plays the leading role in research, innovation and commercialization, we know that institutions such as the National Research Council can be important partners in discovering these new engines of growth. This is why the 2012 economic action plan also proposes \$67 million to support the National Research Council in refocusing on business-led, industry-relevant research.

*Government Orders*

Edmonton Centre is home to many world-class research institutions and companies at the forefront of the innovation economy. Earlier this month, I was honoured to join Ceapro, an Edmonton-based biotechnology company, to announce the signing of a letter of intent with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to collaborate in the development of a unique variety of oats. This new variety of oats will enable Ceapro to extract larger quantities of its flagship product, an active ingredient found in oats. Ceapro's team of chemists, biologists and engineers is developing cutting-edge ways of extracting natural ingredients from oats that have health benefits. These active ingredients are then used by major brands in cosmetic and therapeutic products. Ceapro's success, both as a corporate citizen and local employer, is a great example of the multiple benefits that economic innovation brings to communities like Edmonton and, by extension, to the rest of Canada.

Another example of how these initiatives are playing out in innovation capitals like Edmonton is the impressive work of a company named Synodon. Based in Edmonton, the company has developed a system that can remotely detect gas, enabling the monitoring and measurement of methane gas in the Arctic. The funding will allow this technology to be used by Natural Resources Canada to survey the vast Canadian Arctic. Synodon's proposal is one of over 60 that will be supported by the new program, Canadian innovation commercialization.

• (1600)

Public Works and Government Services Canada has been working with selected companies, like Synodon, to build partnerships that allow their innovations to be matched with federal government departments.

Companies, like Ceapro and Synodon, bring with them jobs and economic growth to Edmonton, to Alberta and to Canada. They also bring additional benefits. They advance the very science that the next generation of students will study. They achieve feats of human creativity that set the bar to which students, teachers, scientists and researchers aspire. Technological innovation underpins both the history and the future promise of Canadian economic development.

Budget 2012 regenerates and reinvigorates Canada's capacity to innovate and to play a leading role in global research. The first budget implementation plan, Bill C-38, outlined many of these initiatives. In addition, Bill C-45 also advances our ability to cultivate a competitive clean energy market in Canada.

For instance, through the economic action plan, the government initiated a clean energy fund. This fund is providing nearly \$795 million to support research and development projects to advance Canadian leadership in clean energy technologies. This program is already off to a good start. To date, the clean energy fund is supporting two large-scale carbon capture and storage projects in Alberta totalling \$150 million. The goal of the clean energy fund is to help create a variety of clean energy technologies and knowledge needed to ensure that these technologies are widely used in the future.

Our government is committed to sustainable resource development in all sectors. Bill C-45 expands the eligibility for the accelerated capital cost allowance for clean energy generation equipment to include a broader range of bioenergy equipment, and

phases out the corporate mineral exploration and development tax credit, and phases out the Atlantic investment tax credit for activities related to the oil and gas and mining sectors. These shifts will create a more level playing field for taxation in the energy sector and will support a new generation of clean energy producers.

We will continue to work hard to create the necessary conditions in the economy that will bring new jobs, growth and long-term prosperity. Though we are on track for the Canadian economy and Canadian families, with over 820,000 net new jobs created since July 2009, we will work as hard as ever to honour our commitment to Canadians to be global leaders in economic stewardship. Against the backdrop of a fragile global economy, especially in Europe and the United States, our largest trading partners, we will continue to make economic stability and prosperity a bedrock priority.

The people who gave me the great honour of representing Edmonton Centre expect things to get done here in Ottawa. Budget 2012 and Canada's economic action plan are doing just that. This is not the time to rest on our laurels, to sit back and let partisanship get in the way of delivering results for Canadians.

I would like to speak for a couple of minutes to the nationwide economic benefits of activity in Alberta. Contrary to some recent regrettable remarks by a couple of members opposite, which I will not bother to dwell on, it is the job of Alberta MPs to represent all that our province is and all that it has to offer to the rest of Canada. That is no different from the job of MPs from every part of this country. At the same time, we all have a responsibility to be part of a much bigger picture and that is the picture of Canada.

While the resources in any province are technically the property of that province, Alberta MPs certainly understand that our natural resources are there for the benefit of the entire country. By an accident of geography and geology, Alberta and Saskatchewan have vast reserves of oil and gas to be developed for the national good. By an accident of geography and geology, Quebec is blessed with the capacity of hydro power, British Columbia with forestry and so on across the country. None of these accidents of nature make one part of the country better or worse than any other. What they do collectively is make us the richest country in the world in terms of natural resources. We should all be proud of that and we should all appreciate what each part of our great country offers to the overall good of each and every Canadian.

We should not be practising the politics of division. We should be preaching and practising the politics of unity and sharing a common bright future in Canada that is much more than merely the sum of its parts. All members of this House were elected to strengthen the economy and lay the foundation for jobs of tomorrow.

*Government Orders*

I am proud of our government's accomplishments to date but there is more to be done. I urge all members of this House to support the budget implementation act and allow it to continue to move forward in carrying out Canada's economic action plan.

• (1605)

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a document titled, "The Government's Response to Question on the Order Paper No. 988".

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if that was a proper point of order. The time to have put that forward was in the period for routine proceedings which, by her own party's manoeuvres, was ended for today and we were prevented from putting forward petitions, reports from committees or any other routine proceedings.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** In response to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, it is my understanding that the minister was merely tabling a document. This is not the answer that is being tabled. Ministers may rise at any time in the House to simply table a document. The answer that will be required will have to be tabled in the appropriate procedure at some point in the future.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague who is a member of this government, probably the most incompetent government in the history of Canada. In fact, it has run up the largest deficit in Canada's fiscal history and the largest trade deficit in Canadian history. Some 330,000 more people are unemployed today than before the recession.

I am therefore pleased to ask this question of the member, who talked about research and development. This government has made cuts to the scientific research and experimental development program, cuts that have been condemned by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Can my colleague comment on the government's decision to go ahead with those cuts to research and development? Why does he think his party did that?

• (1610)

[English]

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to deficits and so on, our deficit is the smallest in the developed world with respect to the GDP, which is the true measure of a deficit. Of course, the number is larger than it was 50 years ago but, with inflation, that is what one would expect.

When we talk about trade deficits, part of that problem is Canada's strength. If our trading partners are weaker and not buying, that will generate some trade deficit. It is actually a measure of our strength. We are working hard with our partners in the EU, U.S. and other places to encourage them to increase their economic output and that will balance out in the longer term.

With respect to R and D, our government is focusing our R and D dollars on where they will do the most good.

If the member wants to talk about chambers of commerce, the biggest chamber of commerce in the country is in Edmonton. Believe it or not, it is even bigger than in Toronto or Montreal. I meet with it on, not quite on a daily basis but very often, and it is very impressed and appreciative of the focus that this government is putting on R and D in the places where it will do the most good.

We are not here to sprinkle a few droplets everywhere. We are here to focus on things that will matter most to Canadians, to the Canadian economy and to jobs and long-term prosperity.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's investment in business research and development support was concentrated in the scientific research and experimental development tax credit but we will be cutting that eventually by something like \$500 million a year. If we look at the announced spending that is supposed to come from those cuts to the SR and ED tax credit, they do not add up anywhere near \$500 million.

A lot of companies in my riding and elsewhere rely on that tax credit. These are the innovative companies that are creating jobs that use that tax credit to develop the innovations that make Canadian workers more productive.

I would ask my hon. colleague for Edmonton Centre whether his constituents in the oil and gas technology sector who heavily rely on the eligibility for capital expenditures for the scientific research and experimental tax credit would be happy. Why is he increasing taxes on his constituents in the oil and gas technology sector by cutting the tax credit for SR and ED?

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Mr. Speaker, I find it a bit rich when people stand up and dump on Alberta MPs, Alberta and the Canadian government in general for what they consider to be too much support for the oil and gas business. I will give the member credit for not being one of those people.

The simple fact is that we are in partnership with Canadian industry, certainly the oil and gas industry which is driving the economy of the country at this point, and I think my hon. colleague realizes that. The economic progress is a work in progress. We are going to work with all sectors of the Canadian economy and all technology sectors, as we have been doing, as I laid out in my remarks.

Nothing stays the same forever. We need to focus down the road. We are not focusing on tomorrow necessarily. We want to take care of the short-term needs but we also want to look down the road 20 to 40 years to see what Canada and our economy will look like to ensure we are planning properly for that day.

*Points of Order***POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. After question period, the member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking raised a concern about a gesture that she believes I did or did not do in the House during question period. That is the case and if she or others were offended, I apologize to all members of the House.

\* \* \*

**JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2012**

The House resumed consideration of C-45, A second 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.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to acknowledge the apology from the member for Mississauga—Streetsville. That was a very classy thing to do and I thank him for that.

I would like to speak to Bill C-45. I am honoured to stand in the House to talk about Bill C-45, but one of the sad things about speaking to the bill is that I will be one of the few MPs who will get to do this, because once again the Conservatives have brought forward time allocation on the bill. I believe it is a record. I believe we are at 31. Unfortunately, when we take away democracy 31 times it is not cause to be proud.

I stand today speaking against Bill C-45, but again, it is with much dismay that we do not see enough people being able to debate in this House, with time allocation.

Ironically, Bill C-45 is entitled the jobs and growth act, and it entirely lacks significant measures to create jobs and stimulate growth in the long term for Canadians. Tax credits to small businesses are short term and very small in size. Support to business research and development has been cut. Where is the Canada-wide strategy to create good jobs, while 1.4 million Canadians are still unemployed?

The Minister of Finance announced during the November constituency week that the government will fall short of its own deficit targets. Worse still, the Conservatives have failed to outline any contingency plan to deal with slowing growth and increasingly negative fiscal indicators.

The Conservatives are focused on austerity measures that will act as a further drag on our economy. They have claimed that their budget is about job creation, but again, even they admit it will lead to 19,200 lost jobs in the public service and the PBO projects a total of 102,000 jobs lost.

In his appearance before the House of Commons finance committee on April 26, the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that the Conservative austerity budget would mean a loss of 43,000 jobs and would slow Canada's economic recovery. He confirmed that when combined with prior cuts, there would be a total of 103,000 jobs lost.

The PBO's numbers point to the fact that the budget would create a significant drag on our economy. Even the Centre for Policy Alternatives states: "In total, federal spending cuts could lead to the elimination of over 70,000 full time equivalent positions". These are not only public sector losses. About half of these jobs would be lost in the private sector.

Taking a look at the changes to SR and ED and business R and D support, Bill C-45 would implement significant changes to SR and ED tax credit programs, as outlined in the budget. These changes would reduce the tax credit rate, particularly for large businesses, and eliminate the eligibility of capital expenses. This change could be highly distortional for firms' labour-capital ratios.

While the government has cut at least \$500 million per year through the SR and ED, it has not introduced any new direct funding to replace this gap. The combined effects would be to reduce government support for business R and D at a time when Canadian businesses most need to increase innovation and productivity to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy. This would particularly hit the manufacturing sector, and it is likely to drive firms to move their R and D activities to other countries with better incentives.

The Conservatives are engaged in cost cutting under the guise of addressing underperformance in innovation. They have done nothing to fix the complexity and overhead costs of applying for and administering SR and ED tax credits.

Another thing the bill is reducing and eliminating is the Navigable Waters Protection Act. It removes water protection from the name of the bill. Now it is just about navigation protection. This is not a small change, and it demonstrates the government's reckless attitude toward environmental protection.

In fact, the Conservatives would not allow these changes to be studied by the environment committee, despite the fact that the proposed changes have significant implication for our environment.

The government issued a press release, bragging about the change of the title from Navigable Waters Protection Act to the navigation protection act.

*Points of Order*

•(1615)

This type of measure shows just how out of touch Conservatives are with Canadians' desire to protect the environment and build a sustainable economy. In fact, Bill C-45 completely guts the Navigable Waters Protection Act, with the exception of the 3 oceans, 97 lakes and 62 rivers. The act would no longer automatically apply to projects affecting waterways. This would leave thousands of waterways without protection, meaning fewer environmental reviews by Transport Canada. Efforts by the opposition to ensure protection for all navigable waters were defeated at committee.

Under Bill C-45, only 10 of Canada's 37 designated Canadian heritage rivers would be protected. Those left out of the new act include the Cowichan River, the Clearwater River, the Main River, the Margaree River in Nova Scotia and the Mattawa River, which is close to me. Speaking of what else is close to me, it is the city of Sudbury. The City of Greater Sudbury is known as the city of lakes. There are 330 lakes within the boundaries of the City of Greater Sudbury. Also my colleague from Nickel Belt would have the same concerns as I do.

When all of the lakes and rivers within a riding are eliminated from having the same protections, it makes one scratch one's head as to why we are doing this. Protecting our lakes and rivers is paramount. The City of Greater Sudbury, for example, as I mentioned, has Ramsey Lake within its city boundaries. People can fish and swim practically in downtown Sudbury. People in parts of the city use Ramsey Lake for their drinking water. That would no longer be protected under the Navigable Waters Protection Act or the navigation protection act. That is sad. It leads people to wonder what kind of country we will be leaving for our children.

We need to ensure that our children have places to swim and fish. We need to protect the wildlife within those areas as well, from fish habitat to duck habitat. Throughout my riding and northern Ontario, lakes and rivers would no longer be protected. As I said, 97 lakes and 62 rivers are being protected, and that is what is being changed. We need to ensure we protect more lakes and rivers right across our country because we need to ensure we leave clean lakes, rivers and air for our kids in the future.

New Democrats oppose budget 2012 and its implementation bills, unless it is amended to focus on the priorities of Canadians: creating good quality jobs, protecting our environment, strengthening our health care system, protecting retirement security for all and ensuring open and transparent government. As mentioned, this is another massive omnibus bill that contains a wide range of unrelated measures. The government is trying to ram legislation through Parliament without allowing Canadians and MPs to thoroughly examine it.

One thing my hon. colleague on the other side talked about earlier in his speech is the greatness of our nation. We are blessed to have resources from coast to coast to coast in forestry, mining in my community, lakes and rivers right across the country and the oil sands in Alberta. We should be debating the changes that are being proposed. Unfortunately, as I stated at the outset of my speech, there has been lack of debate and conversation because the government is shutting it down once again. There have been 31 time allocation

motions, which is shameful, especially when we are talking about an issue that is so important to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

•(1620)

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague to expand a bit on his point that the announced reductions in the scientific research and experimental development tax credit are not being met by increases in spending elsewhere, as claimed by the government. I see there are \$110 million for the industrial research assistance program, \$12 million for business-led networks of centres of excellence, \$40 million for procurement and \$37 million for industry academic collaboration. That adds up to about \$200 million, but SR and ED is projected to be cut by at least \$500 million. In fact, the government's estimates are lower than some independent estimates.

I would like my colleague to comment on that, please.

•(1625)

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. The government is now stifling innovation and research in the country by cutting SR and ED and tying the hands of many of the businesses that we need to expand. In an economy where we are starting to see slowdown, we truly need our businesses to be able to invest in research and development. However, cutting \$500 million this year out of SR and ED means that many of those businesses are not going to have the resources to be able to expand and to be able to look at new and innovative ways of growing.

What we see here are no ideas of addressing this gap. What we will see is continued cutbacks and our businesses continuing to falter.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague from Sudbury why it is so important to keep those jobs in research and development for economic growth and for the future of Canada. We saw all the cuts in environmental programs and everything, but why is it so important to keep those kinds of jobs?

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, those jobs are truly important to our country because those are the well-paying jobs that actually spur our economy. They are the well-paying jobs that allow men or women to look after their family, to contribute to family life. That is the type of job that actually allows them to buy a car and to buy a house. It allows them to be contributing members to the middle class.

What we are seeing with the elimination of these jobs and the creation of part-time jobs is that they are not family-sustaining employment. Why it is so important to ensure we are supporting SR and ED is to continue to see the growth and innovation in research in this country. We can be the leaders. We can be world leaders. We are right there, but we can get even better.

*Points of Order*

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my hon. friend from Sudbury could help me figure out a puzzle. The Conservatives say they have eliminated millions of lakes from the Navigable Waters Protection Act because millions of lakes were getting in the way of municipalities and cottage owners. Could he posit why it is that many of these millions of lakes, 90% of the lakes removed, do not exist anywhere near a municipality or a cottage owner?

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, I really do wish I could figure that riddle out. When we are looking at 97 lakes and 62 rivers that are being protected right across the country, that is not even half of the lakes and rivers that are in my own city.

We call our city the city of lakes. We have done a great job in Sudbury of re-greening. If we look at how we used to smelt and how we used to mine, I am very proud of my community and what we have been able to do to change. I take my kids swimming right in downtown Sudbury. We fish there. People have drinking water there. Unfortunately, the millions of lakes right across our country, which we are so proud of, are no longer being protected under the Navigable Waters Protection Act. That is shameful, because it truly is scary what kind of country we will be leaving for our kids if the government continues to go down this path.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, Employment Insurance; the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, Regional Economic Development.

[English]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today on behalf of my constituents in Richmond Hill to speak to the jobs and growth act, 2012, which would implement key provisions in our economic action plan 2012 tabled in March of this year.

Measures in Bill C-45 would continue to grow Canada's economy, fuel job creation and secure our long-term prosperity. I am also pleased to say how truly honoured I am to serve the good residents of Richmond Hill. They are hard-working, dedicated to their families and communities and committed to improving the lives of those less fortunate than themselves.

Richmond Hill is also a community of entrepreneurs. In fact, nearly 85% of all businesses in my riding employ fewer than 20 people. Therefore, any measure which helps small business is very important to them. That is why I strongly support the measures in Bill C-45 and economic action plan 2012.

I would also like to take a minute at this point to reflect on the economic action plan 2012. As members know, it was tabled eight months ago and has received the most debate of any budget in recent history. It is a continuation of our long-term vision, first set out in 2006.

Fortunately, we had many fundamentals of that plan in place, like paying down the debt, before the global economic recession struck. Also fortunately, because of the foresight and the leadership of the

Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, we have successfully weathered that storm.

Since July 2009, employment has increased by over 820,000 net new jobs. That is more than 390,000 jobs above the pre-recession high, which is by far the strongest growth seen among G7 countries through the recovery. Moreover, the private sector has been the primary driver of new job creation and 90% of all new jobs are full-time positions, with more than two-thirds of those in high wage industries.

Real GDP is also significantly above pre-recession levels, which is again the best performance by far in the G7. In short, Canada has come through the global economic storm well and the rest of the world has noticed.

For example, both the IMF and the OECD expect Canada to be among the strongest growing economies in the G7 over the next year and for the fifth year in a row, the World Economic Forum has rated Canada's banking system as the world's soundest. *Forbes Magazine* has ranked Canada number one in its annual review of the best countries for business. Three noted credit rating agencies, Moody's, Fitch, and Standard and Poor's, have reaffirmed their top ratings for Canada and it is expected Canada will maintain its triple-A rating in the year ahead.

Looking at this year's budget and its enabling legislation, Bill C-45, we can be confident that the measures it contains will continue our recovery and promote job creation and economic growth for all Canadians. It is worth noting that the commitment to manage public finances in a responsible manner has been a key element of our government's comprehensive long-term agenda.

We have done so in order to foster strong sustainable long-term economic growth and create the high-quality value-added jobs of tomorrow. In addition to paying down the debt prior to the global recession, we have followed through on this agenda by implementing broad based tax reductions and investing in knowledge and infrastructure.

Economic action plan 2012 further advances this agenda by announcing a set of measures to improve conditions for business investment, encourage responsible resource development, promote innovation to support research and development and to facilitate greater participation in the labour force by under-represented groups.

These are all goals that my residents in Richmond Hill support. The jobs and growth act, 2012 moves ahead with many important steps to build a strong economy and create jobs.

● (1630)

The bill would support families and communities by improving the registered disability savings plan and would help Canadians save for retirement by implementing the tax framework for pooled registered pension plans. It would close tax loopholes and take landmark action to ensure that pension plans for federal public sector employees would be sustainable and fair compared to those offered in the private sector.



*Points of Order*

I would like to highlight one of the most important enabling legislative items to my riding and that is with respect to pooled registered pension plans.

The reality is that most entrepreneurs and small businesses in Richmond Hill and elsewhere simply do not have pension plans. Pooled registered pension plans are an important step toward providing an innovative, new, low-cost private pension option to millions of Canadians currently without access to a workplace pension plan. This includes not just employees but employers and the self-employed.

The House may recall in December 2010 there was a unanimous agreement at the meeting of federal and provincial finance ministers to pursue a framework for PRPPs as an effective and appropriate way to help bridge existing gaps in the retirement system. This new landmark program that will help Canadians save for their retirement is a result of federal and provincial governments working together to help ensure the long-term strength of Canada's retirement system.

Another tremendous aspect of Bill C-45 is the action it proposes to help ensure the sustainability of public sector pensions. Unlike previous governments that were content to ignore questions of long-term affordability, we are taking the fiscally responsible position of putting the long-term state of Canada's finances first, even introducing landmark reforms for members of Parliament and senators' pensions. Next to jobs and the economy, this has been one of the most often mentioned issues in my riding. We are taking the necessary steps to make public sector pension plans sustainable, responsible and fair.

We are doing this in two important ways. First, we are moving the public sector pension plan to a fifty-fifty contribution arrangement, finally making public sector employee contributions equal to what the government contributes. Second, for employees who join the federal public service starting next year, the normal age of retirement will be raised from 60 to 65. These two important changes will go a long way to promoting the long-term sustainability of public sector pension plans, while ensuring they are fair to Canadian taxpayers.

Extending the hiring credit for small business is another important and positive step for my riding of Richmond Hill. By offsetting some of the EI premium increases when businesses grow their payroll, this measure has been very effective in helping small businesses to maintain or strengthen their business performance. I am glad to see that this measure is being extended.

I would also like to mention how important it is to cut red tape for small businesses. Over the years the growth of compliance items has become absolutely enormous. The red tape burden has been identified through our nationwide business consultations as a major impediment to job creation. That is why our government has taken steps to reduce unnecessary and duplicate compliance items so entrepreneurs can focus on what they do best, which is growing their business and creating jobs.

To summarize, the jobs and growth act, 2012 would continue our government's long-term and focused plan for low taxes, job creation and economic growth. This is what my residents in Richmond Hill have asked for and this is what our government intends to deliver.

I urge all members of the House to vote in favour of this budget so we can keep Canada's economy strong and keep Canadians working.

● (1635)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech very carefully, but unfortunately the things he believes in make him more apt to believe in Santa Claus than to stick to reality.

In an article published in the *New York Times*, well-known financier Warren Buffett wrote, in a letter entitled *A Minimum Tax for the Wealthy*:

[*English*]

"Between 1951 and 1954, when the capital gains rate was 25 percent and marginal rates on dividends reached 91 percent in extreme cases, I sold securities and did pretty well".

[*Translation*]

He also talked about the 15 years after that, when the rate was 70%, and concluded by saying:

● (1640)

[*English*]

"Never did anyone mention taxes as a reason to forgo an investment opportunity that I offered".

[*Translation*]

If there is a way to make money, people will do it, no matter what. Mr. Buffett has shown this and he practically calls people fools who believe that raising taxes may cause investors to flee.

How does my colleague respond to that?

[*English*]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's reference to Santa Clause is clearly a misuse of the term.

However, for five quarters in a row the Canadian economy has grown, with 820,000 net new jobs, 90% of them permanent since 2009. I know the NDP members snicker when they hear this because they do not like to hear the truth. On page four of their 2011 election platform, they clearly are asking for a \$21.5 billion increase in carbon taxes, which would raise prices on just about everything Canadians purchase.

It is a little rich for the member to quote Warren Buffet.

*Points of Order*

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just cannot resist asking my hon. colleague across the way why his government is intending to raise taxes on innovative companies, the companies in my riding and elsewhere that rely on the scientific research and experimental development tax credit, the companies that will be developing the technologies and increasing the productivity of workers to provide the jobs for my children and presumably his children as well. Why is the government in this budget increasing taxes on innovative companies by cutting the scientific research and experimental development tax credit?

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. member has focused on the 2% overall reduction to the Canadian budget that we have brought forth in the House. There are countries that are cutting 20%, 25% and 30%. Companies in the member's riding and in my riding are benefiting from the fact that Canada's corporate tax rate has been reduced by some 15% and 11% for small businesses. That has created jobs for the member's riding in Kingston and the Islands. It certainly has created jobs in my riding of Richmond Hill and in every community across the country.

Having the lowest debt to GDP ratio among G7 countries is a clear sign that our economy is going the right way under the leadership of our Prime Minister and our Minister of Finance and I am proud to be on this side of the House.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be on this side of the House as part of the Conservative team and it is good to be able to talk today on Bill C-45, the jobs and growth act, 2012.

While I am on feet, I did want to salute the Parliamentary Spouses Association, which today held a fundraiser that raised \$10,000 for the Tim Horton Children's Foundation. I would like to salute everyone who had a part in that today.

Bill C-45 is an act to implement certain provisions of the budget. It is the jobs and growth act, and our plan is working. We have seen 820,000 net new jobs created since the recession started in July 2009. There are more people working today than before the recession began, and that is because of the prudent leadership of our Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and our strong plan to ensure that our economy remains strong.

We are among the leaders in economic growth in the industrial world and our debt to GDP ratio is among the lowest in the world. Truly, Canada is the envy of the world right now because of our financial position.

We have had some independent accolades. Members do not have to take my word for it, although I would appreciate it if they would. Canada has had the best banking system in the world for five years in a row, according to the World Economic Forum. As my colleague before me mentioned, *Forbes* magazine has indicated that Canada is the best country in the world in which to set up a business.

However, we know that the economic recovery is fragile. We cannot take it for granted. We have seen sluggish growth the world over, including Europe, and there are concerns about the fiscal cliff in the United States. There is uncertainty everywhere around the world, in Greece, Italy and Spain. In many countries, the economic future does not look bright. We have to be concerned about that as

Canadians. Even though we have had a good run of economic growth, we cannot assume that it will continue forever. That is why we need strong leadership and the strong measures included in Bill C-45.

We must remain vigilant if we are to maintain the significant economic advantage that we have built up over the last number of years. That means continuing to promote things like responsible resource development. We need to continue to promote things like our oils sands and our natural resource sector, provided that we do so in a way that is both economically beneficial and environmentally responsible, and that is what we have committed to doing.

We need to continue to maintain a low-tax plan for jobs and growth. I heard a previous questioner indicate that perhaps we should be raising taxes in order to keep our economy strong. However, on the Conservative side of the House, we disagree. We believe that we need our low-tax plan for jobs and growth. Raising taxes would not lead to growth but in fact hinder growth.

We need to continue to promote trade of our Canadian goods and services, not just to our traditional trading partners but also with the developing world. We need to look to countries that need the things we produce and we need to continue to promote our interests in those countries. That is why I am so pleased that the Minister of International Trade is away from Canada a lot because he is working on our behalf to secure new markets for our goods and services. I want to thank him for that. Indeed, we have learned that we cannot afford to rely solely on the United States because it has economic troubles of its own. We cannot have all of our eggs in that basket. Therefore, we need to continue to promote trade.

These are the kinds of things, in my view, that we need to continue to maintain for Canada's economic advantage. However, there are a few specific items in Bill C-45 that I do want to address, such as improvements to the first nations land management system.

My riding is home to 33 first nation bands. Many of them are under the first nations land management regime. Our government is committed to working with first nations to create conditions that will accelerate economic development opportunities.

● (1645)

Giving interested first nations greater control over their reserve lands and resources would bring a brighter and more prosperous future for them. Our government has already taken steps to enable interested first nations to assume greater control of their own land and resources under the First Nations Land Management Act. I am encouraged to see so many first nations in my riding under that regime.

*Points of Order*

Under the first nations land management framework, first nations can opt out of the 34 land related sections of the Indian Act and establish their own regimes to govern their lands, resources and environment. Thanks to the actions of our government, in January 2012, there were 18 new entrants that came under the framework. Today, there are 56 first nations that are operating and developing their own land codes. We want to expedite the process to allow more first nations to participate.

On March 15, 2012, the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board voiced its concern with the current process. It said:

First nations do not have an ability to move swiftly in developing their lands as a result of the restrictions that arise under the Indian Act and the red tape that comes with them.

The Auditor General has also identified the designation and leasing process to be a cause of unnecessarily lengthy approval times.

Bill C-45 proposes changes to the First Nations Land Management Act that would reduce voting thresholds to a simple majority vote, eliminating the need to hold repeated votes over a one or two-year period. What sometimes happens now is that if a majority of members of a first nation do not choose to cast their ballot, the First Nations Land Management Act requires them to hold a second vote, which takes time and resources and unnecessarily slows the process. One can imagine if we applied the same rule to a municipality that said it were electing a council and that if over 50% of the people did not bother to show up to vote, that process was not good enough. We think that process needs to be changed so there is one vote with a simple majority allowing first nations to control their own lands.

The second change would eliminate the need for an approval by order in council and allow the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to authorize land designation. This would make the system more efficient and allow first nations more control, thereby reducing approval times for first nations land management by several months. The streamlining of land related approval processes would encourage economic development on first nations land and create jobs, growth and long-term prosperity there as well.

I also want to talk about something that affects small businesses in my riding. The majority of businesses in my riding are certainly small and medium-size enterprises. Just as they are across the country, they are the major engine of job creation in my riding. Budget 2011 contained a hiring credit for small businesses of up to \$1,000. It provided relief to small businesses by helping to defray the cost of new hires. Bill C-45 would extend the credit to an employer's increase on its 2012 EI premiums over those paid in 2011. It has the potential to help over 536,000 employers whose total EI premiums were below \$10,000 in 2011. This would reduce payroll costs by \$205 million and allow small and medium-size enterprises to continue to hire more folks and to keep their costs in check so they can continue to drive our economy forward.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said of the credit:

It is a popular measure among all SMEs but is particularly important among growing firms as it helps them strengthen business performance.

I met with some constituents who had concerns about pipelines in my riding. They asked about credits for oil and gas companies and

why we were not doing more to promote green energy. I encouraged them to read Bill C-45, which is rationalizing and phasing out over the medium term inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. We are also promoting the use of green technology through the accelerated tax credit program there.

I want to sum up by saying Bill C-45 continues our government's plan for jobs and growth. The plan is working. The plan is having real results for Canadians. I encourage all members of the House to support it.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague carefully. Unfortunately, the Conservatives are once again presenting us with a monstrosity of a bill, like the one they presented last spring, Bill C-38, in which they attacked old age security, employment insurance and health transfers to the provinces.

Once again, Bill C-45 shows that the Conservatives have not learned their lesson; they still want to keep Canadians in the dark and they want to prevent the members here in the House from doing the job they were elected by Canadians to do.

I would like my colleague to expand on this question: why is the government acting this way?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I want to address some of the preamble of that question.

Obviously our government has done nothing but increase transfers to provinces for health care. The health care transfer will be \$40 billion by the end of this decade, which is an increase in anyone's books. I do not quite understand how the NDP's math could indicate that a 6% increase for the next three years and 3% going forward is a cut.

We believe that the 2012 budget should be passed in 2012. We do not think that is an unreasonable expectation. There have been hours of debate in the House, hundreds of speeches, and 12 different committees studying different aspects of the bill. We want our jobs and growth plan for 2012 to be passed in 2012. We think that is a reasonable expectation.

• (1655)

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon. I also want to congratulate him for the fantastic work he is doing on the committee on national defence, work that clearly applicable in other fields.

*Points of Order*

The member has added richly to this debate. He has also shown how our long-term plan for jobs, growth and prosperity in this country is reinforced by the measures this government is taking to reform first nations, to improve the Indian Act and to make the bands in his riding and elsewhere more dynamic.

However, there is a contrast between his speech and the questions coming from the opposition. It really does pivot on the issue of taxes. We have not seen, certainly not in this country under this government, anyone well versed in the economy advocating higher taxes. Many other jurisdictions with higher taxes than Canada's are bringing them down.

Could the member comment further on just what a disaster it would be for the Canadian economy to see a \$21 billion carbon tax and, indeed, other taxes, which some estimate could go as high as \$50 billion, introduced in this economy in lieu of the plan that he has spoken in favour of?

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, that is great question by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

I think that is the main difference between our government and the opposition. We hear them complaining about cuts. The cuts they complain the loudest about are when we cut taxes. When we cut the GST from 7% to 6%, they complained loudly about that. They complained even more loudly when we cut it from 6% to 5%.

We have heard members here in debate calling for an increase in taxes on the Canadians who are doing well, and for increases in taxes on corporations. We are not going to go down that road. No country has ever taxed itself into long-term prosperity. No country has ever taxed itself into creating jobs and growth.

We will continue on our low-tax plan for jobs and growth because it is the right thing to do.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak strongly against the government's omnibus budget bills and their repeated affronts to democracy, and, specifically, to the gutting of environment legislation in Bill C-45.

Previously, through economic action plan 2012 and Bill C-38, the government severely cut the budget to Environment Canada, gutted environmental legislation and cancelled the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. The Conservatives have also silenced dissent from environmental non-governmental organizations and have continued to muzzle government scientists. In so doing, they affect our economy and environment today and in the future.

Through Bill C-45, our world-renowned natural heritage is being further imperilled by a government that fails to understand that water is the foundation of life and that it is essential for socio-economic systems and healthy ecosystems.

The World Bank states that, "water is at the centre of economic and social development", and is elemental across economic sectors including agriculture, energy and industry. Good management of water resources is fundamental to moving to a green economy.

In Canada, we depend on water for drinking, fishing, swimming. This precious resource further supports farming, recreation, tourism and economic growth.

Unfortunately, water management is becoming more challenging with climate change. Bob Sandford, lead author of Simon Fraser University's adaptation to climate change team, warned in 2011 that:

The days when Canadians take an endless abundance of fresh water for granted are numbered...Increasing average temperatures, climate change impacts on weather patterns and extensive changes in land use are seriously affecting the way water moves through the hydrological cycle in many parts of Canada, which is seriously impacting water quantity and quality.

As a result, the team called for a dramatic reform of Canada's water governance structures and made many recommendations: the recognition that water is a human right integral to the health and security of Canadians; the development of a new Canadian water ethic; the creation of a national water commission to advance policy reform; an improved understanding of the importance of water to Canadians' way of life; national water conservation guidelines and improved monitoring; and coordinated long-term national strategies for sustainably managing water in the face of climate change.

In stark contrast to those recommendations, the government would strip federal oversight from thousands of Canadian waterways through its latest anti-democratic and draconian omnibus legislation, Bill C-45. Specifically, the government would abolish the Navigable Waters Protection Act, which currently requires federal approval for development on the thousands of bodies of water across the country that are large enough to float a canoe.

The Navigable Waters Protection Act of 1882, considered Canada's first environmental law, would be changed to the navigation protection act. The focus of the law would no longer be to protect navigable waters but, rather, to protect navigation.

Canada has a huge number of lakes. The exact number is unknown. However, of the roughly 32,000 lakes previously protected under the old act, just 97 lakes would now be protected under the new act. Sixty-two rivers and three oceans would also be protected under the new act. Construction of bridges, dams and other projects would be permitted on most waterways without prior approval under the new act.

Needless to say, the original budget said nothing about restricting federal controls over lakes and rivers.

Jessica Clogg, executive director and senior counsel, West Coast Environmental Law, stated:

The Bill C-45...is a wolf in sheep's clothing that will have major implications for the environment and human health. So much for the federal government's promise that the bill would focus on budget implementation and contain no surprises.

The rewritten law would strip environmental protection once provided by the mandatory federal review. Ecojustice's executive director, Devon Page, said:

Simply put, lakes, rivers and streams often stand in the path of large industrial development, particularly pipelines. This bill, combined with last spring's changes, hands oil, gas and other natural resource extraction industries a free pass to degrade Canada's rich natural legacy.

*Points of Order*

●(1700)

Astoundingly, 90% of the lakes that would still be designated as protected are in Conservative ridings, 20% are in NDP ridings and only 6% are in Liberal ridings. Unbelievably, pipelines would be directly exempted from this law. Under the new act, pipeline impacts on Canada's waterways would no longer be considered in environmental assessments.

Instead of killing the old Navigable Waters Protection Act, the government should reverse the changes that would strip previous environmental protection of lakes, work to protect Canada's coastline, establish a network of marine protected areas in Canada's waters, encourage the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, prioritize clean water, restore our freshwater ecosystems, clean up contaminated sediment and protect and restore essential habitat.

The government must stop repeatedly abusing Parliament by ramming through massive omnibus bills and turning the legislative process into a farce.

Two years ago, the government introduced an 880-page omnibus bill, representing half the entire workload of Parliament from the previous year. This past spring, the government introduced Bill C-38, a 425-page omnibus budget implementation bill that made sweeping changes to employment insurance, immigration and old age security. An astonishing 150 pages were devoted to destroying 50 years of environmental oversight. None of these changes were in the Conservative platform. This time, Bill C-45 is a 443-page omnibus bill that would alter some 60 pieces of legislation, including the Canada Labour Code, the Fisheries Act, the Indian Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

Canadians are tiring of the government's omnibus bills. Last spring there were demonstrations across the country to protest the omnibus budget bill, Bill C-38. Five hundred organizations joined the BlackOutSpeakOut campaign to stand up for democracy and the environment. Three thousand two hundred pages of complaints flooded the office of the finance minister and there was extensive international criticism.

In 1994, the MP for Calgary Southwest, our current Prime Minister, criticized omnibus legislation suggesting that the subject matter of such bills was so diverse that a single vote on the content would put members in conflict with their own principles. He said, "Dividing the bill into several components would allow members to represent the views of their constituents on each of the different components in the bill."

The Conservative government's action reek of hypocrisy. The Prime Minister is now using the very tactics he once denounced. Bill C-45 hides large changes to environmental laws, subverts democracy and weakens the protection of ecosystems.

The government's record on the environment is appalling, as recognized repeatedly by its bottom of the barrel environment performances. The 2008 Climate Change Performance Index ranked Canada 56th out of 57 countries in terms of tackling emissions. In 2009, the Conference Board of Canada ranked Canada 15th out of 17 wealthy industrialized nations on environmental performance. In 2010, Simon Fraser University ranked Canada 24th out of 25

countries. This week we have been ranked 58th out of 61 countries on climate policy.

Under successive Conservative governments, the economy has been repeatedly pitted against the environment. Laws have been weakened and repealed to fast-track development with the environment and the health and safety of Canadians being put at risk. When did the debate change from protecting the environment in order to safeguard human health and well-being to gutting environmental protection in order to streamline expanding growth? Is it not time we made human health, particularly for our most vulnerable, our children, a consideration in the environmental debate?

\* \* \*

●(1705)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and if you seek it I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, if the House has not disposed of the report stage of Bill C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, by 2 p.m. on Tuesday, December 4, the Speaker shall suspend the proceedings to allow members to make statements pursuant to Standing Order 31; followed by oral question period no later than 2:15 p.m.; and at 3 p.m. the House shall resume the proceedings on Bill C-45.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Does the hon. House leader have unanimous consent to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**JOBS AND GROWTH ACT, 2012**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-45, A second 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.

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to ask my colleague a question.

The government is constantly telling us that everything in the budget implementation bill was mentioned in the budget that was tabled last March. However, we are well aware that a number of things that now appear in Bill C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures—because there was also Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget—were not mentioned in the budget tabled in this House last March by the Minister of Finance.

*Points of Order*

The Conservatives are therefore tabling two 400-page bills proposing measures that were not even mentioned in their budget last March. Does my colleague have any comments to make about that?

[English]

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is correct, and I mentioned the surprises in my speech.

Canada's leading environmental organizations, including the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the David Suzuki Foundation, Ecojustice, Pembina Institute, Sierra Club, Canada West Coast Environmental Law, World Wildlife Federation Canada and others issued a joint statement decrying the fact that once again the federal government was making significant changes to environmental legislation without proper democratic debate.

When the government came to power, it inherited a legacy of balanced budgets but soon plunged the country into deficit before the recession every hit. It is absolutely negligent and shameful that the government would now continue to gut environmental safeguards in order to fast-track development and balance its books.

Because the government did not campaign in the last election on gutting environmental protection, Canadians should rise up, have their voices heard and stop the government's destruction of laws that protect the environment and the health and safety of Canadians, our communities, our economy and our livelihood.

• (1710)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, to make it clear for the viewing public who are listening to this, the bill is 440 pages. Exactly half of that is in English and the other half is in French. The member knows that what is said in English is said exactly the same in French. I do not know whether they know that.

Of the 220 pages, which took me two and a half hours to read, is my colleague not happy with any of it or are there parts she is happy with and would vote for? Whether it is 5 pages or 220 pages, she would not be supporting us anyway.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, omnibus bills are anti-democratic and draconian.

I will detail where we have had cuts to the environment. We have had announced cuts of 700 positions to Environment Canada, cuts of another 200 positions to Environment Canada, the gutting of environmental legislation that has protected the health and safety of Canadians for the last 50 years, and the weakening of species at risk laws and water laws. We will go from protecting 32,000 lakes down to 97 lakes.

I will talk more about Bill C-45. West Coast Environmental Law said:

giving industry the option to request that their existing commitments to protect fish habitat be amended or cancelled, or that they be let off the hook for promised compensation for lost or damaged habitat;  
eliminating the Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission; and,  
needlessly tinkering with the Fisheries Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012....

We heard from a former Conservative fisheries minister earlier on Bill C-38 who said, "They are totally watering down and emasculating the Fisheries Act. They are making a Swiss cheese

of it". At the subcommittee, he said, "The bottom line is to take your time and do it right. To bundle all this into a budget bill, with all its other facets, is not becoming of a Conservative government, period".

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Bill C-45, jobs and growth act, 2012, because the measures in this bill are very important to my constituents in the riding of Kitchener—Conestoga.

Our economic action plan was built on a long-term plan called Advantage Canada. This plan has five major themes, and even through these difficult times we have advanced all five of these themes.

First is the tax advantage. Business taxes have been cut. This makes a huge difference for businesses in my riding who want to expand and provide opportunities for more jobs, which in turn makes a big difference for families in my riding. Since the Conservative government came to power in 2006, personal taxes are roughly \$3,100 less for the average Canadian family of four. Tax freedom day, which in 2005 was June 26, has now been moved back to June 11. Again, these are crucial movements for families who are trying to raise young children.

Second is the fiscal advantage. We are on track to eliminate our deficit in the medium term.

Third is the entrepreneurial advantage. Canada's entrepreneurial advantage will reduce unnecessary regulation and red tape and lower taxes to unlock business investment. This idea of having one project and one review is so important. For too long, we have had all kinds of duplication on environmental assessments that has slowed down the process and added increased cost to businesses that are trying to expand. Also, the adoption of the one-for-one commitment, to reduce a regulation every time a new regulation is added, is an important aspect of cutting red tape for business.

Fourth is the knowledge advantage. Canada's knowledge advantage will create the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world. The knowledge infrastructure program, or KIP, has been amazingly important in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga. Conestoga College alone has benefited from investment from this program, which has allowed it to expand its engineering, health science and food processing faculties to increase its ability to add value-added products for our farming community.

*Points of Order*

Fifth, and finally, is the infrastructure advantage. Canada's infrastructure advantage will create modern world-class infrastructure to ensure the seamless flow of people, goods and services across our roads and bridges, through our ports and gateways and by way of our public transit. Investment in the rapid transit system in the Waterloo region and the Highway 8 bridge expansion and widening are increasing our ability to move goods and people through our region, which is also an amazing advantage for our businesses.

All five of these pillars have placed Canada in an enviable position relative to our global partners. However, the global scene is very uncertain. We are an exporting nation, so it is clear that our recovery cannot be complete until the rest of the world sorts out its fiscal and budgetary issues. Our manufacturers and farmers cannot sell their products until the rest of the world starts buying again. Therefore, while we are well positioned to take advantage of the eventual recovery, we cannot ourselves make the recovery happen.

While we are an island of stability in Canada, we do sit in a sea of uncertainty. Our role, as the government, is to ensure that the rising tides of global instability do not drown our relative prosperity. The global economic environment still poses great risks to governments, businesses, individuals and families.

I would now like to focus on a few of the issues in my region of Waterloo. My home in the Waterloo region is known for its entrepreneurial spirit. It is known for citizens who embrace risk, recognizing that risk is the door to opportunity. From the farmers whose livelihood depends on the whims of weather, to the high-tech entrepreneurs who risk their savings and sweat equity for the belief in their vision, Waterloo region's success in these troubled times is driven by the willingness of its citizens to believe in their ability to succeed and move ahead with confidence, even in the face of very great risk.

I would also like to summarize a few of Waterloo region's investments, by way of the economic action plan, in education and community and capacity building. First of all, on education, Conestoga College expanded its schools of engineering and health sciences and also instituted a brand new institute for food processing technology. The food processing technology faculty is the first of its kind to serve Ontario's second largest industry. We are known for our primary agricultural products, but I think it is important that we also recognize the importance of providing value-added products through the food processing industry. Also, there is the University of Waterloo and its Quantum-Nano Centre, new buildings with 21st century facilities for environmental studies and the Balsillie School of International Affairs.

• (1715)

As it relates to economic action plan investments in our communities, we have invested in new or renovated recreational facilities in Wilmot, Wellesley, St. Agatha, Breslau, New Dundee, and Kitchener and the McLennan Park and Sportsworld arena.

We have invested in social housing units across the Waterloo region, many of them being renovated and upgraded. Our airport, a crucial engine of economic growth, has made numerous improvements to enhance safety and capacity, thanks to our government's emphasis on regional airports. Our airport is a stellar example of federal investments that improve safety, efficiency and capacity, and

has led to increased trade, investment and employment. We have seen our worst bridges repaired, our worst roads resurfaced and our waste water systems renewed.

As it relates to capacity building in our economic action plan funding, Canada's economic action plan founded FedDev Ontario so that southern Ontario is no longer taken for granted as the only region in Canada without an economic development agency. FedDev Ontario has built programs designed to develop the capacity of southern Ontario's unique industries. These loans have allowed businesses across my riding, from high-tech companies like Miovision, to farm gate businesses like Conestoga Meat Packers, to build the capacity they need to capture new global markets.

This is incredibly important. Instead of seeing viable businesses fail, as other countries have, because of a temporary downturn, Waterloo region's businesses are prepared to capture the opportunities that will emerge when the rest of the world adopts this government's approach of stable banks, prudent budgeting and low taxation.

All of these investments have made our community a better place to live and to develop talent. We are a more prosperous community, a better builder of small and medium size businesses and a better place to raise a family. Going forward, the jobs and growth act promises to further enhance the lives of those I am privileged to represent. The bill's passage will conclude the implementation of Canada's economic action plan 2012 and contains measures that are essential to our continued prosperity.

I would like to now focus on some of the opportunities for business and families and individuals that Bill C-45 contains as it relates to my area. First of all, there is the bridge to Detroit. When I first ran for office, in 2005, Waterloo region's business leaders told me that increasing capacity at the border crossings at Detroit was a high priority. There is over \$130 billion of trade that crosses between Windsor and Detroit. That is almost 30% of all Canada-U.S. trade.

Windsor-Detroit sees more than 8,000 trucks and 68,000 travellers cross that border every day. Over the next 30 years, all forecasts say that this traffic will increase. Truck traffic is expected to triple, while other vehicle traffic will double. The solution is found in Bill C-45. It will enable the government to fund the construction of the solution to these problems. The new Detroit River international crossing would reduce congestion on both sides of the border, support the creation of jobs along the Windsor-Quebec City corridor, particularly in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga, increase the competitiveness of the entire integrated North American manufacturing sector, and provide thousands of construction jobs in Windsor and Detroit, two communities that have been hardest hit by the uncertainty of global markets.

*Points of Order*

Another important initiative in Bill C-45 is the small business EI premium refund. I have referenced the needs of small businesses several times already. In high tech alone, our area enjoys one new high-tech startup business every day. Small and medium size businesses will provide the bulk of jobs created going forward. It makes sense to target hiring incentives to them. We need to provide incentives for them to hire now rather than later, when the economy has already improved.

The pooled registered pension plans are important for small and medium size enterprises because they have trouble attracting and retaining critical talent. One reason for this is that large firms are able to offer much more attractive pension plans, which smaller companies simply cannot afford to administer. These PRPPs will allow small business owners to provide pensions without the significant administrative burdens and responsibilities associated with traditional pension plans.

• (1720)

There are so many good initiatives in the bill, but I will have time to highlight them all. I would urge my colleagues, especially on the other side of the House, to support this bill. It will make a big difference for families in their ridings.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to ask my Conservative government colleague a question about the hiring tax credit for small business that he just mentioned. This measure applies to the 2012 tax year, the tax year that is ending in a few weeks, as we know.

We agree with this suggestion. It was even one of our main proposals during the election campaign.

Could he comment on the fact that this tax credit, granted by the Conservatives, will only apply to the 2012 tax year? In fact, hardly anyone will have a chance to take advantage of it because the tax year ends in just a few weeks.

• (1725)

[*English*]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Mr. Speaker, again, when it comes to taxes, it is this side of the House that has consistently reduced taxes for families and businesses through the past six years of being in government.

On the other side, all we hear, day after day, is to continue to increase taxes, even going so far as putting it right in their platform, on page 4, to include a \$21 billion carbon tax, which we know would not only affect the cost of everything but would have a huge damaging effect on small and medium-sized enterprises.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga mentioned health sciences expansion and an expansion in educational facilities for students.

However, from talking to a number of people I know that one of the bottlenecks for getting people employed is the lack of clinical placements for people working in health sciences technology. Does the budget do anything for that?

On the subject of taxes, I would also ask my hon. colleague, who represents an area where a lot of innovation is happening, why his government is so willing to increase taxes on innovative companies by cutting the scientific research and experimental development tax credit?

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Mr. Speaker, I think I am going to start with the second question first.

This question has been raised many times throughout the day today. I think there is a lack of understanding of what Bill C-45 would do in totality. It is easy to focus on one little area and continue to ask questions about that area.

What my colleague does not understand is that our government has made some significant changes to how small businesses can operate their business. For example, we have removed many bureaucratic barriers for attracting foreign investment into small business. We are also adopting new programs, like the digital technology adoption projects. We are cutting red tape for small business.

Finally, on the last point of encouraging partnerships with colleges, what we see now is many of our colleges are partnering with industry. Industry brings an issue to them to help them solve it, so the engineers are working in partnership with industry. In this way, we have increased collaboration and we are actually addressing the problems that industry has instead of doing some theoretical studies about what a particular need might be.

These are all positive movements going forward.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we see one of Canada's greatest challenges is innovation. It is also good to look at what other countries are doing in the world.

The number one innovative economy is Switzerland. It has set up these things called Swiss competence centres for energy research. I know the member for Kitchener—Conestoga has the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy at the University of Waterloo that looks into clean energy projects.

If we look down the partner list, it is true that private industry is there, but the federal government is nowhere to be seen in that partner list.

Switzerland knows the role of government can be as a facilitator between industry and academia in fostering innovation. Why does the Canadian government not see it the same way?

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we believe business has a solution for many of these problems.

We cannot afford to have government involved in every little issue that business, families or communities represent. It is important that wherever we can we stay out of the way of business to allow them to solve their problems. By removing the red tape, like this budget would do, we will see a big expansion in those opportunities.



*Points of Order*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to add my remarks to those of my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga. I know he is doing an excellent job for the people in his riding. He represents them very well, and that is why he has been re-elected several times.

I would like to begin by giving some context for Bill C-45, because it requires an awareness of the economic situation in Canada and throughout the world. Despite worldwide economic upheaval, Canada has managed to create 820,000 new jobs since July 2009. This really is a huge success. The Government of Canada made decisions that ensure businesses will continue to hire employees. In addition, 90% of these jobs are permanent, full-time jobs and 75% of them are in the private sector.

Since 2008, the World Economic Forum has ranked Canada's banking system the healthiest in the world—that is five years in a row. Moreover, Canada has a triple-A credit rating, while other countries' ratings are being downgraded. This is a great success, because it reduces the cost of borrowing and keeps our interest payments down. This instills confidence and shows that Canada really is a good country in which to invest.

The 2012 economic action plan builds on these successes in several ways. First, it intensifies Canada's pursuit of new and deeper international trade and investment relationships, including updating the government's global commerce strategy.

Second, it implements the action plan on perimeter security and economic competitiveness and the action plan on regulatory co-operation, which will facilitate trade and investment flows with the United States, our most important trading partner.

Finally, it provides support to Canadian businesses through tariff and tax measures, along with extended domestic financing by Export Development Canada. In other words, we are trying to broaden and diversify our international trade.

● (1730)

[*English*]

For the great trading city of Toronto, my home town, international trade agreements negotiated from a position of strength enhance job opportunities, whether to manufacturing, the arts or financial services.

I will highlight some important elements of Bill C-45, which follow through on the promises of economic action plan 2012 introduced in March of this year.

One key element is the responsible development of our natural resources. We are not exactly a mining centre in Toronto in the sense of taking something out of the ground. However, there are many jobs in the city of Toronto created by the mining sector. Of the world's mining companies, 70% are based in Canada, and 50% of the world's mining exploration and development capital is raised on Canadian stock exchanges. There are roughly 800,000 people in Canada working directly in natural resources and another 800,000 indirectly supporting the mining, minerals and energy sectors. This affects Ontario manufacturing and capital markets.

I would add about 10% of employment in places like the oil sands is filled by first nations people. Over 5% of employment in the Canadian mining sector is filled by first nations people. These are important job opportunities for first nations people across the country.

It also supports small business via measures such as the hiring credit for small business, which is important in the riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore. It allocates taxpayer money more efficiently, which means that our taxes can be reduced, whether income, corporate or consumption taxes, and it helps us return to a balanced budget in the medium term.

I will talk to the hiring credit for small business because it is so important for the business people in Etobicoke—Lakeshore, throughout Toronto and across the country. It is a successful measure that has benefited more than 534,000 employers in the last year. It reduces small business payments into the EI fund by about \$205 million. Therefore, it is a significant measure and a shot in the arm for small businesses to hire people.

[*Translation*]

The measures in Bill C-45 protect us from global economic threats, such as the debt crisis in Europe and the fiscal cliff in the United States.

As for Europe, we are encouraged by the measures being taken by European leaders. Several European countries have taken the necessary austerity measures after years of excessive spending. We are also seeing the implementation of a legislative framework providing for a single supervisory mechanism for European banks with the support of the European Central Bank.

In the United States, we hope that the U.S. Congress will find a solution to the country's tax problems. The U.S. is still our biggest customer. It must absolutely purchase products from Canadian companies.

● (1735)

[*English*]

We hope the United States gets back on its feet financially and fiscally because it is very important to us.

Bill C-45 has one primary goal, and that is to create an economic environment that encourages investment and creates jobs. This means removing barriers to investment and growth, such as the useless, non value-added bureaucracy and red tape that we so often see in government. It also means keeping the government's finances in order by streamlining government spending so that eventually we can return to balanced budgets.

I mention that because it is important to highlight what we are not doing. We are not cutting transfers to provinces, unlike the previous Liberal government, where it balanced the budgets largely on the backs of the provinces by cutting transfers. In fact, we are increasing funding for the Canada health transfer, for example, raising it by \$6 billion a year. We are looking at \$29 billion this year and increasing it until it reaches \$38 billion by 2017-18. I should mention that in Ontario, health care spending is only increasing by 3% a year, even though the transfer is increasing by 6% a year. Therefore, it appears the province of Ontario is pocketing the additional 3%.

*Points of Order*

The Canada social transfer will increase to \$12 billion this year and the universal child care benefit will also increase to \$13 billion this year. We are not cutting transfers.

I will mention one thing we are looking to do and that is to streamline public sector pensions. Contributors will pay 50% of the current service cost of the pension plan, which is fair to Canadian taxpayers because that is what those in the private sector are generally paying when it comes to their pension plans, whether it is a defined contribution pension plan or a defined benefit pension plan. For contributors who join the plan after January 1, 2013, the age of eligibility to receive a full pension will be raised from 60 to 65. Again, this aligns itself with what is out there in the real world and it ensures that these pension plans are sustainable for the long-term. We have taken similar measures on the MP pension plan, which had some imbalances that needed to be adjusted.

One of my colleagues mentioned R and D investments. That is very important for the city of Toronto, for the GTA, for the province of Ontario and across the country. A lot has been mentioned about the scientific research and experimental development, or SR&ED, tax incentive program. That is the single largest federal program when it comes to R and D. It provided about \$3.6 billion in tax assistance in 2011.

However, we were recognizing in our government that spending in R and D that SR&ED was not the be all and end all. We needed to make improvements to our scientific research and development. Therefore, we chartered an expert panel, the Jenkins panel. It came with a series of recommendations. We have been following through on those recommendations in the budget and in the budget implementation act.

I want to highlight some of those changes. There has been some streamlining of SR&ED, removing some of the administration and complexity. In its place we are putting in some new measures. We are looking to expand the industrial research assistance program, or IRAP, by \$200 million over two years. That is a very important measure that benefits a lot of innovative companies and it is not based on a tax credit; it is an actual injection of capital into their R and D efforts.

We are also enhancing some specific industry R and D programs with \$470 million over four years to support innovation in automotive, aerospace, forestry and clean technology. It has been very important, looking at more direct investment, as opposed to just tax credits.

Another program I was very involved in, as part of my government operations committee, was when we reviewed the Canadian innovation commercialization program. It was a pilot program for two years, with \$40 million over two years, that looked at helping companies get to their first level of production with new products. In budget 2012 and contained in Bill C-45, we are making that program permanent. It has been so successful. That will be a real shot in the arm.

The last thing I will mention when it comes to R and D is the creation of a venture capital fund for the BDC of about \$400 million.

With all these measures in Bill C-45, I really encourage the opposition to join with us in voting this legislation forward. These

are important measures for the Government of Canada and for the people of Canada. They will move us forward into the next several years.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to ask a question to my colleague, who speaks French very well. I am very happy to see someone from Etobicoke speak French so well. It is rather impressive, so I congratulate him for that. I think that is very important to mention.

I would like to talk about a recommendation made by the Toronto Board of Trade, of which the Etobicoke Chamber of Commerce is a member. In its 2012 Federal Pre-Budget Submission, the Toronto Board of Trade mentioned that it wanted to develop a national urban strategy.

[*English*]

In its submission for the prebudget consultations, it mentioned developing a national urban strategy that includes a national transportation strategy.

[*Translation*]

The organization made that demand in its pre-budget submission. Why did the government not implement this request by the Etobicoke Chamber of Commerce?

● (1740)

**Mr. Bernard Trotter:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Every year, the Minister of Finance receives about 3,000 submissions and requests regarding the budget from people across the country. This demand was not included in the budget.

As for investment in infrastructure, in Bill C-45, the budget implementation bill, there are huge investments in infrastructure. It is not a strategy or document left on a desk somewhere; these are specific responses to Canadian cities to ensure that they have the infrastructure needed to support their economy.

Those are the measures included in the budget implementation bill.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate all of the comments that the member has put on the record. I would ask him to reflect on something that was said back in 1994 by the present Prime Minister. He stated:

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.

Today's Prime Minister was right, back then, in terms of the importance of keeping budget bills short, so that members would be afforded the opportunity to voice their views, give diligence and vote accordingly.

*Points of Order*

Does the member not believe that the budget bill would be a better bill if it were broken down into numerous other pieces of legislation, as has been the tradition in the past?

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Speaker, the member is asking about this legislation being broken up. Previous budgets and previous budget implementation bills going back to 2009 were more complex. The world economic crisis happened, so we had to respond to that.

What we have in the budget is a comprehensive set of measures that form a comprehensive whole. We cannot look at things in isolation when it comes to reducing taxes, increasing investment in other areas or streamlining regulation. All of these things have to fit together, and that is why this bill has been presented this way. This is a comprehensive and integrated plan for putting Canada's economy back on its feet in the face of some very challenging times around the world.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member briefly tied ridings like my riding of Prince George—Peace River in northeastern B.C. to downtown Toronto and mentioned how those capital markets influence the bottom line in my part of the country.

The member spoke briefly about how important responsible resource development is for places in Canada. It is obvious in places like mine, but could he perhaps tell us how important it is to downtown Toronto?

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian economy is actually a wonderful thing. Think about it. The member for Prince George—Peace River is talking about jobs in his part of the country while Canadians working on Bay Street are putting together the legal, financial and technical expertise needed to make some of those projects come to fruition. People in Toronto work in the mining sector in the sense that they are raising capital. They get companies from around the world to list on the Toronto Stock Exchange to make those projects a reality. Canadians are world-beaters. Canadian mining companies based in Toronto are exploring around the world, making jobs happen for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate it if you would warn me one minute before the end of my speech.

What will history say about this government?

In the spring, the government already trashed numerous economic, social and environmental laws, by forcing the passage of Bill C-38, the budget bill, a 400-page brick we voted on for 26 hours. We presented a number of amazing amendments, but were unable to change so much as a comma. This government thinks it has the truth and the right line.

After the challenges resulting from Bill C-38 in the spring, we thought the government would make honourable amends, and this time it would allow for broader debate on the budget implementation bill. Unfortunately, that is not the case. They came back with the same kind of shenanigans: they introduced a bill that would significantly amend 62 statutes. This is again a 400-page bill that they want to have us pass as quickly as possible, and for which they have imposed a gag order. That is perhaps what this government will

be remembered for the most in 10, 15 or 20 years. It will be the gag order government. Our colleagues across the way will have participated in this travesty of democracy for months.

We are talking here about a bill that amends 62 statutes. We have looked for the common thread among the statutes in the budget, but there is none. This is a way of forcing the machine to work, of putting us on the ropes, of cutting the work of Parliament down to size, and ultimately making a mockery of it.

If we look at the content, we quickly realize that the measures proposed by the Conservatives do not reflect the values of Canadians. Ironically, Bill C-45, called the Jobs and Growth Act, 2012, contains no effective measures to create jobs or to stimulate economic growth in Canada.

In fact, the Conservatives claim that the 2012 budget is going to create jobs, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the best friend of people in Canada who exercise critical thinking, claims, rather, that it will result in the loss of 43,000 jobs, which will have a domino effect and have an impact on 102,000 jobs in Canada. That is the overall effect of this budget implementation bill.

In the meantime, the unemployment rate is going up, and instead of making the rules more flexible to allow working people to receive support when they are unemployed, the rules are unfortunately being toughened.

I should point out that Bill C-45 is a threat because the changes it proposes in relation to the environment show disrespect for Canadians and their awareness of environmental issues.

At a time when the world is becoming more aware of the importance of sustainable development, or in other words, our capacity to meet our needs while allowing future generations to meet theirs, the Conservative government does not understand this logic and stubbornly insists on weakening environmental regulations.

After withdrawing Canada from the Kyoto protocol, making cuts to research programs at Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and dismantling the round table on the environment and the economy, the Conservatives are continuing down the same path with Bill C-45, which once again weakens the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and guts the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

It is important to note Canada's place when it comes to environmental matters. Recently, Canada was ranked 57th of the 60 countries included in the Climate Change Performance Index. In order to find Canada, hon. members should start at the bottom of the list instead of the top. We have dropped quite far. On the international stage, many countries do not envy us when it comes to the environment.

● (1745)

The Conservatives will boast that they have eliminated two small fossil fuel subsidies in this budget and improved two tax credits for certain types of equipment for green energy production. Proportionately speaking, these two measures are minimal compared to the \$1.3 billion in assistance that the Conservative government continues to give to the oil and gas industry each year.

*Points of Order*

Environmental protection seems to be a nuisance to the Conservatives. We have to wonder whether this is a Conservative government strategy to facilitate co-operation with big business.

We also see that power is becoming more and more concentrated in the Conservative cabinet. We saw it with the reform of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act reform, and we are seeing it with environmental reforms. We had panels of independent experts. Now, assessments will basically be subject to the minister's approval.

Bill C-45 guts the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The consequences are imminent since thousands of lakes and rivers will no longer be protected. Of the 37 designated Canadian heritage rivers, only 10 will now be protected. I checked the list for the rivers in my area—Rivière du Diable, Rivière Rouge and Rivière du Nord—but none of them are mentioned.

I hope I am going to be able to include them in that list. And I wonder when we will have a chance to put new rivers and new lakes on the list. I would like to preserve the rivers in my riding in their purest possible natural state, because they are an essential part of the beauty of the region that brings tourists there. Beautiful rivers and beautiful lakes: that is what tourists come to see.

The Minister of Transport said the objective of the act was to reduce obstacles to navigation on navigable waterways and added that navigable waterways that do not appear in the new list will be protected by other federal legislation, by the provinces and by cities. Have funds been set aside for the provinces in connection with the role they will have to play, given the additional workload they will have? We are divesting ourselves of our obligation to protect rivers and lakes. In fact, that is a responsibility that is set out in the Canadian Constitution.

I am going to quote Tony Maas, director of the national freshwater program of the World Wildlife Fund. The government is trying to make a distinction between navigation and navigable waters, for legislation to facilitate navigation.

Picking navigation apart from the waters that enable it is very much artificial [and I would say "absurd"]. The two are part of a bigger whole. Their separation is as artificial as thinking you can protect a fish without protecting its habitat....

The government puts everything in little boxes, as if things were no longer connected to one another.

Because I had prepared to make a 20-minute speech, my time is nearly up. Before beginning this last part, I am going to request the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion:

I move that, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-45, in clause 321, be amended by adding after line 13 on page 291 the following: "The addition of the navigable waters listed below is deemed to be in the public interest and the governor in council shall, by regulation, as soon as is reasonably practicable after the day on which this act receives royal assent, add those navigable waters to the schedule", and I would like the list to include the Rivière du Nord, the Rivière Rouge, the Rivière du Diable and the Rivière Pashby, all of which are rivers that run through my riding.

I request the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion.

• (1750)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Does the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member does not have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion.

• (1755)

[English]

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was intrigued by the member's comments regarding the Navigable Waters Protection Act and I want to cite one or two examples for him about the kind of problems that can arise.

For example, a fishway was proposed for Spencer Creek in Hamilton, a small waterway that goes through a residential area in Hamilton, and the application under the Navigable Waters Protection Act took over a year to approve due to a backlog of applications. That is just for a fishway in a residential neighbourhood.

Another example was an aerial cable built by the Renfrew Hydro Electric Commission, which required approval because it crossed over the Bonnechere River near Renfrew. That took over six months to approve.

I was very intrigued by the member's comments that somehow there is a constitutional right to such delays. I wonder if I understood him correctly. Does he think these are the kinds of things that we should be regulating in Canada?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is twisting my words. The Navigable Waters Protection Act has been around for some time. It provides crucial protection to fragile marine habitats. We cannot let just anything happen.

You are playing with facts that you do not understand. Right now I am looking at how much the Fisheries Act has been modified and how much trawlers are decimating miles and miles of seabed. It will take hundreds of years to recreate favourable environments for species to reproduce.

You said that it takes time to conduct assessments. I am not saying that the process is perfect, but in this situation, you are throwing the baby out with the bathwater, along with the fly in the bathwater.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I would remind hon. members to address questions and comments through the Chair, and not directly to other members.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to see the New Democrats now supporting the Liberals in opposition to third reading of Bill C-45. After witnessing them vote more than a thousand times with the Conservative Party through hours and hours of committee work, I really do appreciate their coming on side with us at this stage of the game.

As the member has pointed out, there are other aspects of the bill that we need real answers to. This is just a bad bill. He tried to get unanimous support on one aspect of the bill, making reference to waterways. On my part I could talk about the electronic travel authorization that is being requested.

Does he not believe, as we in the Liberal Party do, that all in all this is just a bad bill and that the whole thing should be broken down into another legislative agenda?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle:** Mr. Speaker, from the beginning, we have been suggesting splitting up this bill, because there is no common thread among its various components. It eliminates the commission on hazardous products. What does that have to do with the budget? We cannot help but wonder. I have no answer to that, but clearly, that commission gave workers handling hazardous products information about those products and how dangerous they are. Yet the Conservatives are eliminating that, which is completely inconceivable. Why did they throw everything into one bill?

My greatest fear is that this will set a precedent. It started with 60 laws. One day they will introduce a bill that amends 300 laws. They will pass the bill and MPs will have nothing left to say for the rest of the year because everything will have been said. I refuse to accept that kind of parliamentary process.

[English]

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today in support of Bill C-45, the Jobs and Growth Act, 2012, which includes measures to deliver job creation and economic growth.

Everyone in this chamber should realize that Canada's economic health is vital for all Canadians. We have to ensure both immediate and long-term economic growth. In introducing this bill, the government is taking a pragmatic approach to strengthening Canada's economy in the middle of global economic peril.

Opposition members have opposed the jobs and growth bill with procedural arguments, suggesting for example that there has been insufficient debate on the legislation. In reality, this bill has been debated in the House and in committee for many hours. The government invited 11 different committees to study and provide feedback to the House on the bill. The government is committed to timely and open debate on legislation.

The measures in the jobs and growth bill are reasonable in light of the economic challenges that Canada faces as a result of the global economy. I suppose that the procedural arguments proposed by the opposition are necessary only because they cannot find much of anything else to oppose in the very reasonable content of this bill.

Rather than considering the opposition's exaggerations, let us consider some facts. The fact is that in these unsteady economic times, Canada has proven to be a global economic leader. We have consistently been ranked very highly by international standards. Since July 2009 alone, over 820,000 net new jobs have been created in Canada. This is the highest level of job creation in the whole G7.

The World Economic Forum has rated our banking system the world's best. The IMF and the OECD have both projected that

### *Points of Order*

Canadian economic growth will be among the strongest in the G7. Canada also has the lowest debt to gross domestic product ratio in the G7. The major credit-rating agencies have affirmed Canada's AAA credit rating.

Such international acclaim is clear demonstration that the government is on the right track for economic success. It is clear that global economic uncertainty continues. Collectively, we in the House are responsible for ensuring that Canada stays on track to ensure economic success for future generations. We must support economic growth and job creation.

This bill prioritizes these two goals with targeted measures to ensure a strong economic outcome for Canada. For example, the hiring credit for small businesses is a targeted measure that will have a huge impact on job creation. In extending the hiring credit for small businesses, this bill aids Canadian small businesses, which drive the Canadian economy and are vital to stability.

A hiring credit for small businesses stimulates job growth because it alleviates the cost of hiring new employees. This creates greater economic opportunities. Last year alone, 534,000 employers took advantage of the up to \$1,000 payroll credit, including many small businesses in my riding of Kitchener Centre. The hiring credit for small businesses works for Canadian business and it works for all Canadians. I am proud that our government introduced it and is now moving to extend it.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which represents small businesses across our country, including Kitchener, has praised the hiring credit for small businesses. The CFIB has told us that the credit "makes it easier for them to continue to support Canada's economic recovery by creating jobs".

This tax credit is a significant incentive for small to medium-size businesses to create new jobs, and its extension will be equally successful. All members of the House should be lining up to support a budget that contains such a measure.

Another example in the jobs and growth bill is the active steps taken to ensure that pension plans for federal public sector employees are fiscally responsible.

● (1800)

The solution to economic instability will not be found in raising taxes. Higher taxes would hinder the Canadian economy and kill jobs. This is not the avenue to pursue. Unfortunately, opposition members who oppose this bill repeatedly propose tax increases rather than job creation and economic growth. Economic prosperity for years to come will only occur through a low tax approach.

*Points of Order*

This bill not only takes the current economic climate into consideration but it is also forward-thinking. It would provide opportunities for Canadians to invest in the future. For example, in 2007, the government introduced the registered disability savings plan to help Canadians with disabilities and their families save money for long-term financial security. After much consultation, the jobs and growth act would improve upon the existing registered disability savings plan. The changes would allow more Canadians with disabilities to take advantage of the RDSP by allowing qualifying members to open an account for those who do not have a legal representative. There would be another change. As it stands, regardless of the amount withdrawn, a beneficiary is penalized for making a withdrawal from an RDSP account. Canada disability savings grants or Canada disability savings bonds received in the preceding 10 years are simply clawed back. This is unfair. This bill would provide for proportional repayment based on the amount withdrawn, a very sensible solution and one that every member in the House should support.

The bill would ensure the efficient implementation of the policies and measures introduced in the economic action plan passed in the House to support the economic future of all Canadians. Much of the content found in this bill would simply bring technical clarification to existing measures that have already passed in the House. For instance, this bill would deliver the necessary tax framework for pooled registered pension plans, which create an opportunity for all Canadians to participate in a structured pension plan for the first time ever. This is another way that the jobs and growth act would effectively support families and communities to provide for their long-term economic future.

Responsible resource development measures are yet another way in which the bill responds to our very real economic peril. Responsible resource development maximizes the potential of our resource sector, thus creating high-value jobs while enhancing environmental protection. Tighter, more effective regulation of development necessary to a growing population is essential for a growing economy. Environmental regulation should provide a clear framework to ensure measurable environmental outcomes, not requirements that have the effect of obstructing development without improving environmental outcomes. That is one of the goals of this bill.

It has been observed that a wise man will make more opportunities than he finds. During these times of economic uncertainty, it is important to be aggressive in creating initiatives to strengthen the economy. In this jobs and growth act, the government is being proactive about creating economic opportunities. The act's promotion of interprovincial trade, improvements of the legislative framework governing Canada's financial institutions, facilitating cross-border travel, the removal of red tape and the reduction of fees for Canadian grain farmers are just a few more examples of proactive measures that have the potential to really stimulate economic growth.

I very confidently support the jobs and growth act which would deliver job creation and economic growth. The targeted measures included in this act would ensure long-term economic strength to the benefit of my constituents in Kitchener Centre and all Canadians.

I call on all members of the House to join together in supporting these measures, join in leading Canadians safely through the stormy seas of global economic uncertainty that surrounds us.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am hearing a lot of talk about delays as though they were a bad thing. However, no one is talking about the reason for these delays. They are forgetting to say that constructive work is being done behind the scenes.

We rarely, if ever, hear our Conservative colleagues talk about the fact that these waterways, these rivers and lakes, are like a body with different connecting parts. I am thinking of the Richelieu River, which is the heart of my riding. Many rivers that are no longer protected connect to it.

What is more, the Montreal-Portland pipeline passes under the river. Signs to that effect are placed along the length of the river. This infrastructure has been there since 1960. Given that the environmental regulations that the member opposite seems to think serve only to cause delays did not exist at the time, we now have aging infrastructure that could leak oil and gas into the bottom of the river when the flow of oil is reversed.

I would like to know how the members opposite can have such a lack of understanding of the consequences, impacts and domino effect that the absence of these protections will have on our waterways.

• (1810)

[*English*]

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member raises a good question, and it really does highlight the difference between this side and the other side.

We are not interested here in delay for the sake of delay. We are interested here in trying to improve environmental outcomes. For example, the government recently demonstrated its commitment to strengthening environmental protection by refusing consent to the Cenovus Energy project at Canadian Forces Base Suffield National Wildlife area in Alberta simply because it was not justified in the circumstances. There is no automatic green light when there are environmental issues.

On the other hand, we have the case of an aerial cable that was built by the Renfrew Hydro Electric Commission, and it required approval under the Navigable Waters Protection Act because it crossed over the Bonnechere River. It met all the standards for transmission lines over navigable waters, but it still took six months to approve that project with no measurable environmental outcome whatsoever.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting how the member tries to rewrite history to a certain degree.

A couple of years after Paul Martin left the Prime Minister's Office, we were into this huge global crisis, and he is trying to take credit for Canada being a global economic leader.

The reality of the situation is that the banking industry is a world leader because Prime Minister Chrétien and his cabinet resisted bank mergers during the 1990s.

In terms of converting a trade surplus and a budget surplus into deficits, Paul Martin had the surpluses and the Prime Minister converted them into huge deficits.

This particular bill has very little to do with the actual budget. It is only a small portion of it that is actually critically important to the budget. My question to the member is: Why did the government choose to have such a huge budget bill when in fact most of it is irrelevant to the actual passage of the budget itself?

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Mr. Speaker, my friend accuses me of rewriting history, but I happened to be around in the 1988 to 1992 election period when, in fact, the Liberal Party expressed its strong opposition to the GST. Talk about rewriting history. As soon as Mr. Chrétien was elected, he immediately reneged on that promise and the Liberal Party was gung-ho for the GST. It took a Conservative government to at least reduce the rate from 7% to 6% to 5%.

My colleague's comments make it clear that he did not get the point of my 10 minutes of talking about the fact that this budget implementation bill is necessary to stimulate jobs and growth. We need to be able to turn; we need to pivot on a dime, because of the economic crisis all around us. That means we have to have responsible resource development, we have to have investments in the knowledge economy and we have to have exactly what this budget implementation bill provides.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today once again to express my strong opposition to Bill C-45, the second omnibus budget bill that the Conservatives have introduced since the beginning of this Parliament.

I am deeply disappointed that, for the 31st time, the Conservatives have decided to silence a number of members. They will not have the opportunity that I have right now to speak out against this bill, which is going to have a major impact on their constituents. All the same, I am pleased to have a chance to defend the interests of the constituents of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier who are opposed to Bill C-45.

The government claims that this bill does nothing but implement measures already set out in the budget that was adopted last March and that it contains no surprises. We all know that this statement is totally false and that it is simply an attempt to mislead Canadians. This massive bill, with its more than 400 pages, contains many measures that were never announced when the budget was tabled and places even more power in the hands of Conservative ministers, something that we all want to prevent.

Right from the start, the NDP has deplored the fact that Bill C-45 is another attempt by the Conservatives to undermine hundreds of pieces of legislation without consulting with anyone and without having to account to anyone. The Conservatives are once again doing exactly the same thing they did the last time they introduced a budget bill, when they ripped holes in the Fisheries Act without consulting with fishers' communities, when they made huge cuts to

### *Points of Order*

the employment insurance system, as if it belonged to them, without consulting the businesses or the workers that contribute to it, and when they made cuts to old age security and to health care transfers to the provinces. It is unbelievable that the same thing is happening again here in the House.

Despite our opposition and the opposition of thousands of Canadians throughout the country, the Conservatives are refusing to listen to reason and are forcing us to swallow a bill that will drastically affect the quality of our environment and the quality of Canadians' lives today and well into the future. Even worse, the Conservatives are trying to hide the truth from Canadians by rushing the bill through as quickly as possible, without allowing members to give serious consideration to all the impacts that Bill C-45 will have on Canadians.

In the speech I gave in the House on this subject a few weeks ago, I mainly talked about matters of procedure and the anti-democratic nature of this bill. Since then, unfortunately, nothing has changed. We have seen this since the beginning of their mandate: the Conservatives have absolutely no scruples when it comes to limiting their opponents' speaking time and flouting the democratic principles that have been at the heart of our parliamentary system since Confederation.

Bill C-45 is no exception to these new rules that the Conservatives want to impose on Parliament. The NDP has repeatedly asked this government to split this massive bill, so we can examine it in detail in committee and propose the amendments that are needed to make this bill acceptable, but of course the Conservatives have refused. Yes, a few committees were assigned to examine certain aspects of this bill, but given how little time the government allowed them to do their job, they were unable to hold reasonable and reasoned debates, and the vast majority of the witnesses who were called to appear were chosen by the Conservative government. We can all agree, therefore, that this process was neither very serious nor objective.

Obviously, the committee review was simply an attempt by the government to create an appearance of transparency and to silence the opposition, and nothing more. However, when we do exactly what this government is hoping Canadians will not do, and analyze Bill C-45 carefully, we can clearly see that a genuine examination of the provisions of this bill and the actual amendments is called for, because too many of these measures may well have disastrous consequences for the environment and our country's economy.

I am thinking, for example, of the changes made to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, which will become the Navigation Protection Act. Already, we have a good idea of what this government wants to do with it: forget about the fish, the environment, the flora and fauna, and focus on boats and navigation. That is all that counts. Once it is passed, Bill C-45 will eliminate the idea of protecting waterways from the act, and will no longer automatically require an environmental assessment when infrastructure is constructed on virtually all of the waterways in Canada. Once more, this shows what contempt the Conservatives have for protecting our environment.

*Points of Order*

●(1815)

If Bill C-45 passes as is, only 3 oceans, 97 lakes and 62 rivers in all of Canada will be protected and over 90% of those are in Conservative ridings. That raises some questions.

We must also remember that the provinces and municipalities will now be forced to protect waterways in their jurisdiction, even though they do not have the resources to do so. Of course, the government did not allocate additional resources—logistical or financial—to help the municipalities and provinces carry out this new task, now that the federal government is downloading its responsibilities.

Such measures could be catastrophic for a riding like mine, Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, which has 2,258 lakes, rivers and streams. There is Jacques-Cartier River, which some may recall is currently contaminated with TCE. This government still refuses to acknowledge the crown's responsibility in the matter. There is also Sainte-Anne River, which crosses my riding on the Portneuf side; and Lac Saint-Augustin, one of the most polluted lakes in Canada that now, thanks to this government, will be even less protected than it was to begin with. There is Lac Simon, near Saint-Raymond-de-Portneuf; Rivière Montmorency, a rather large river in the region; Rivière aux Pommés, which goes through Neuville and the riding of Portneuf; and there are many more. I could name 2,258.

All these waterways play a vital role in my region's economy, which depends on industries such as tourism and recreational fishing.

We often hear the Conservatives say they are strong advocates for hunters, for obvious reasons, appalling reasons that I will not bother to repeat here in the House. However, we never hear them speak out on behalf of fishers. Recreational fishers come to my riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier to take advantage of our ZECs, controlled harvesting zones. These people help drive the economy in my region. They come to enjoy the beautiful landscapes and natural resources that Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier is famous for. With this bill, there is nothing left. Developers can build a dam or a bridge anywhere they like, to the detriment of all the industries that depend on these waterways, but too bad. The bill introduced by the Conservatives does not contain any measures to do anything at all, apart from the fact that the provinces and municipalities can seek their own recourse.

How can the government justify its decision to stop protecting lakes and rivers in my region and across Canada to my constituents and to all Canadians? It is absolutely inconceivable.

Bill C-45 poses another major problem. I am talking about the changes to support measures for businesses conducting scientific research and experimental development. Many of my colleagues have already talked about this issue. I am glad they did, because this is a crucial part of the budget that needs to be changed.

So, quite simply, they decide to eliminate these measures and they also get rid of eligible investment costs. What they are really doing is cutting \$500 million from this program and increasing taxes for businesses. The Conservatives will never present it to us this way, but this is exactly what they are doing. They are creating an increase for the small and large businesses that drive the economy. This is

hardly very consistent with their message that they are champions of the Canadian economy. It is obvious that they are not.

Technology, productivity and innovation are essential elements that allow our businesses to compete on the international marketplace, and to compete with emerging countries, which will be setting up good R&D programs for their businesses.

Our businesses will simply leave and it is the manufacturing sector, which is still very significant in the Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier area, that will be directly affected by this ill-considered decision.

I would like to end quickly by saying that unless the bill is amended to reflect the priorities of Canadians, I will have to oppose it. I am going to take advantage of the fact that I still have some speaking time left to seek the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion.

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-45, in clause 321, be amended by adding after line 13 on page 291, the following:

(2.1) as the addition of the navigable waters listed is deemed to be in the public interest, the governor in council may make regulations adding these to the schedule, as soon as practicable after the day this act is assented to, by indicating, with regard to lakes, their approximate location by latitude and longitude and, with regard to rivers, their approximate upstream and downstream points, with the description of the water body and, in the event that more than one water body bears the same name as listed hereinafter, it selects the one to be added to the schedule:

●(1820)

The list includes Raymond Lake, Salt Lake, Reindeer Lake, St. Augustin Lake, Creek Lake, Rat Lake, Kasba Lake, Aurora Lake, Anderson River, Tadek Lake, Morell Lake, Larocque Lake, Campbell Lake, Newland Lake and Thomas Lake.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Does the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** There is no consent.

●(1825)

[*English*]

Before we go to questions and comments, just a reminder to all hon. members that we have five minutes for questions and comments. I note there are many members who wish to pose questions to the member who just spoke, so I would ask members to keep their questions and responses succinct so more members will have the opportunity to participate in the question and comment period.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.



*Points of Order*

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, within this massive, unprecedented budget bill one aspect proposes to establish electronic travel authorizations. That means if individuals are from a country where a visiting visa is no longer required, or they are not American citizens, they would have to tap into the Internet to get pre-approved before coming to Canada. Very little debate, if any, has actually occurred in the House on that issue.

Does the member agree with the Liberal Party that this is one of the reasons why we need separate pieces of legislation as opposed to one massive bill of this nature in order for us to provide due diligence?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my Liberal colleague for his question. He often speaks in this House, and so I am not surprised that he has a question.

As I have said on many occasions and as a number of my colleagues have also said, omnibus bills are undemocratic and do not allow us to focus on each element that we want to discuss.

This subject seems to stir emotions. I hope that my Conservative colleagues are reacting because they believe that omnibus bills are totally unacceptable.

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the common cowardice of the person in a position of strength who abuses their power is the privilege of the government. For the umpteenth time, the government is unfortunately invoking closure. Let it take advantage of its position of strength. The immorality of this gesture will weigh heavily on it.

I really liked the speech by the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier on this subject, as is often the case. The bill is quite lengthy and covers a lot of ground. In some ways, it is a draft.

I would like her to expand a bit on the problems with an omnibus bill that makes changes to many things, without any prior review and without respect for the people of Canada.

**Ms. Éline Michaud:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Beauport—Limoilou for his excellent question that will allow me to continue the point I started earlier.

A number of Conservatives have already asked in the House how NDP members could be opposed to a budget that includes a tax credit for small businesses. Although I must say that this is an excellent tax credit, it will end in about 20 days. They will blame us for all kinds of things like this, when what we oppose are the big measures, such as the gutting of the Navigable Waters Protection Act or the changes to support measures for research and development.

We cannot examine these issues and truly understand the effects they will have, since the government does not give us a chance to do our job, to examine the figures and call in the witnesses who deserve to be heard. I am talking not only about government witnesses, but also witnesses from all segments of society.

I could go on about this, but my time is running out. A number of my colleagues can continue to explain to the government all the

problems with the omnibus bills it is introducing and how undemocratic they are.

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by my colleague, who was very eloquent, as usual.

Bill C-45 is ironically entitled the Jobs and Growth Act, 2012, but I do not see a single effective measure to create jobs or stimulate economic growth.

We know that the tax credits that were given to small businesses are short and long term and are insignificant.

Support for research and development was cut. Where is the national strategy to create jobs for the 1.4 million Canadians who are still looking for work?

• (1830)

**Ms. Éline Michaud:** Mr. Speaker, one might find such a strategy in the NDP's platform, but certainly not in the Conservatives' budget implementation bill.

It gets worse. Based on what is being proposed, 102,000 more jobs could be lost and not just in the public service. This is a problem. The government is not creating jobs; jobs disappear faster than the government can create them.

[*English*]

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand in support of Bill C-45, a bill that would strengthen Canada's opportunities at home and abroad.

We on this side of the House are very proud of what has been accomplished since the worldwide recession in which Canada has been a leader in both the G7 and G20 and will continue to do so for some time due to our strong economic environment and our robust natural resource sector. It is with this in mind that I would like the folks to know what seems to be missed by the opposition, that being all of the benefits that the bill would provide to Canadians.

The registered disability savings plan holds benefits for thousands of Canadians. For instance, there would be greater access to the RDSP savings for small withdrawals. It would also give greater flexibility for parents who have children with disabilities in that RESPs can be rolled into RDSPs if the plan shares a common beneficiary. This is a great move forward because each year, unfortunately, some parents must face great despair when a child is injured and faces years if not a lifetime of rehabilitation. This, in a small way, is to recognize that savings transferred from an RESP to an RDSP will be of benefit in the long term.

*Points of Order*

Amending the Income Tax Act to accommodate PRPPs is yet another great option that is now available for those companies that, under normal circumstances, could not offer a pension plan to their employees. So many small businesses across Canada will be able to offer pension benefits which, in my opinion, will work toward employee retention. When employees see that their employers are looking at ways to ensure their longevity at a company, it can only prove as a benefit for all involved.

I will switch now and speak to the Fisheries Act because the opposition seems to focus in on it.

Under the Fisheries Act, fines collected under section 40 would be directed to the environmental damages fund. This fund money would be used for proactive initiatives to advance protection of Canadian fisheries. I find it interesting that the opposition parties do not mention this very proactive move by our government to ensure that the environmental damages fund stays well-funded. They will always focus on the doom and gloom and how the destruction of our environment is inevitable, even when Canadians know that we have some of the strongest environmental standards in the world.

More evidence of this is found under section 136 of the Fisheries Act, which says that “No person shall”:

- (c) damage or obstruct any fishway constructed or used to enable fish to pass over or around any obstruction;
- (d) damage or obstruct any fishway, fish stop or diverter constructed or installed on the Minister’s request;
- (e) stop or hinder fish from entering or passing through any fishway, or from surmounting any obstacle or leap;
- (f) damage, remove or authorize the removal of any fish guard, screen, covering, netting or other device installed on the Minister’s request; or
- (g) fish in any manner within 23 m downstream from the lower entrance to any fishway, obstruction or leap.

Fish are not to be obstructed.

Our government recognizes the importance of fish spawning and the ability for fish to get to their natural spawning grounds. We also respect the inherent right of first nations for social or ceremonial purposes or for the purposes set out in a land claims agreement.

Following on with first nations, I am pleased that changes to the Indian Act would make it easier for first nations to have designated land on reserves. This is huge for first nations as it would allow for economic development in a more efficient manner. By making these amendments, it will allow first nations to work at the speed of business. Making decisions in a timely manner is what first nations want.

● (1835)

That brings me to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. Let us be perfectly clear that this is not about weakening environmental standards. This is about recognizing that not every waterway in Canada must be subject to rules regulating boats, vessels and ships. In my constituency, two major waterways will fall under this new act, as they should, the Columbia River and the Kootenay River. They are two of the most used river systems in western Canada, both for recreation and electrical generation.

Let me flesh this out a little more so Canadians understand what this is. The assessment factors include, first, the characteristics of the

navigable waters in question; second, the safety of navigation; third, the current or anticipated navigation in the navigable waters; fourth, the impact of the work on navigation in the navigable waters, for example as a result of construction, placement, alteration, repair, rebuilding, removal, decommissioning, maintenance, operation or use; and fifth, the cumulative impact of the work on navigation in the navigable waters.

We have gone further. We also put in regulations with regard to depositing and dewatering to ensure that the safe travel of water vessels is paramount.

I have given an overview on some items found in Bill C-45. As one can see, our government continues to put the interests of Canadians first. We are the only party that recognizes the importance of protecting the environment, all the while ensuring that our natural resource sector moves forward to ensure that Canadians will be able to afford the services they have today and into the future.

I would like to invite anyone to ask any questions.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his remarks. Unfortunately, I do not share some of his views.

As far as environmental matters are concerned, does he believe we can get the toothpaste back in the tube?

Given that 99% of lakes and rivers will no longer be protected and that the impact on ecosystems is measured in the medium and long terms, it will be incredibly difficult to correct the situation once the damage is done.

What does he think of the fact that future generations may have to deal with polluted rivers and lakes?

[*English*]

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the environmental standards this government is putting forward, I believe most Canadians recognize that we are trying to ensure that Canadians in the future have something to look forward to. They also understand that we are going to allow Canadians to utilize our waterways to the best of their abilities, but also recognizing that we have to move forward with economic generation.

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for his speech, but on one particular point I was astounded. That was when he led by boasting about the disability tax credit, which the Liberal leader in question period today explained to the House and Canadians why in fact this is such a terrible policy.

The reason it is a terrible policy is that one only benefits from that tax credit if one is a disabled person with sufficient taxable income. We all know that many disabled people have very little if any taxable income, and therefore those who need it the most receive the least, and often they receive zero.

How can the hon. member boast about a policy, the disability tax credit, when he really should be expressing shame for such an unfair measure?

*Points of Order*

• (1840)

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, had the hon. member also been listening to my statement, he would have heard that one can transfer RESP moneys to the RDSP, which is very important for those families who have young children who, unfortunately, been in a car accident and have a lifelong disability. I believe it is important to recognize that children will benefit from this proactive policy decision made by our government in this bill.

**Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from British Columbia for his hard work in his two decades with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and for serving as mayor in his community, as a small business owner, and understanding the importance of working in the community.

Could the member elaborate and share with the House the timeliness of getting this budget through?

We want to create jobs, grow our economy and provide long-term prosperity for our businesses. What would the small business tax credit mean for small business owners across Canada?

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, as a small business owner, I recognize that the credit would give me the ability to invest back into my company. It would give me the opportunity to allow my employees to work better within the company.

All the things we provide to small business only grow small business. It is the economic driver that pushes this country. Anything we can do for it, we will.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP would have done much more for small business.

We proposed to reduce taxes from 11% to 9% for small business. We were going to provide up to \$4,500 for new hires, a one-year rebate on employer contributions to CPP and EI and retention bonuses of \$1,000 in non-refundable tax credits, which would have created 200,000 jobs for Canadian families. Furthermore, we would have extended the accelerated capital cost allowance for eligible machinery and equipment for primary use in Canada, which would have had the effect of promoting productivity gains in our manufacturing sector.

We cannot support the bill simply because it does not go far enough. We have very credible propositions to give to the government, but they fall on deaf ears, unfortunately.

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the question there, but I can give 800,000 reasons why we have done a good job, which is the number of jobs we have created since 2008. I think that is far more important than the 200,000 he is talking about.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would politely ask you to please let me know when I have one minute left.

Looking at the clock, I am starting to believe that we may yet end on a high note this Monday evening, debating amendments that would actually help everyday people.

It took me a while to read the whole bill. It is indeed a massive document. We were given plenty to read back in June, and now even

more, but that is okay; we like it. We are not quite so fond of the content, however.

That said, I will concentrate on what was said in the House today, particularly by my Conservative colleagues. There was a lot of talk about encouraging investment and creating the ideal economic environment for small and medium businesses. Much has also been said about the way these investments and economic conditions will help everyday Canadians.

I find this all very interesting. In fact, as an MP, I am very busy helping this time of year organizing food drives, attending Christmas dinners and preparing Christmas baskets, and so on.

Over the past few weekends, I have had a chance to take part in many food drives around my community and lend a hand to the organizations in charge either by making a run, coordinating the runs or preparing Christmas baskets.

Yesterday, for example, I took part in the food drive at the Saint-Basile-le-Grand volunteer centre, in my hometown. The response rate was lower this year than it has been in previous years. However, the centre coordinator, Mrs. Laurin, told me she was hoping for a good turnout despite the bad weather, because she has seen an increase in the number of people who use the food bank put on by the volunteer centre, which helps people in need.

There have been many national reports to that effect and I also hear many people in the field talk about this. I will therefore elaborate on the relevance of these remarks and facts.

As I just said, I often hear that the budget itself and the omnibus budget implementation bill will help people in need. However, it seems that people need more and more assistance and that the needs increase every day, every month and every year.

I am not talking about the Parliamentary Budget Officer or some major international economic organization. With all due respect to them, I am not talking about those who assess the national or international situation. I am talking about people in my riding who work every day in the field, in extremely difficult situations. I am talking about people who are in a better position than anyone in this House or at any university to comment on this.

This is what they are saying and it is exactly the same thing people are saying at all the food drives I have been to, that there is a huge increase in the number of people using food banks. If that is what economic prosperity looks like, then we have a huge problem. That is one of the reasons we must oppose Bill C-45 and the budget itself.

I will be speaking again about another issue that we have discussed many times: the Richelieu River. As I have said in many of my questions and comments today, it is one of the most important, if not the most important file for the riding's MP.

*Points of Order*

The Richelieu River is one of our region's ecological, economic and heritage assets. Towns were built around the river for economic reasons. The Richelieu River is an important heritage asset that also has environmental value for the people of the region.

This is once again relevant to my work as an MP, because I have been thoroughly briefed on the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

• (1845)

In recent years, I have had the opportunity to work on this issue together with elected municipal officials. We tried to find a compromise between the freedom to travel at high speeds in a boat, which is enjoyable in the summer, and preventing the erosion of the shoreline, while allowing other users of the river—for example, the Otterburn canoe and kayak club—to safely enjoy the river that belongs to everyone, in the eyes of this MP, everyone in the region and in the House. It is a community asset.

When working on this issue, I familiarized myself with the act. It is most certainly very complex. Contrary to the claims of the Minister of Transport, the act was designed not only to protect vessels and the navigation of our waters, but also all of the river's ecological systems. I hope that those in power, the country's government, realize that the government does not operate in a silo.

The various interests that affect these different files are very interconnected. That is exactly what we are seeing here. I think it is unfortunate and a bit dishonest for the Conservatives to say that, since this affects transport and navigation, it has no impact on the environment. After all, the reason this law was created in the first place was to ensure that we are able to derive economic benefit from our waterways without putting the ecology and heritage of the various rivers, lakes and other bodies of water at risk.

I find the situation in northern Quebec, for example, more problematic, since one riding covers 53% of Quebec's land mass. If we look at a map, there are many waterways and lakes. We do not even need to know the exact number. Yet, there is a problem with the numbers when it comes to the percentage of waterways in Quebec that will continue to be protected after this bill is passed. It does not add up. That is why we are legitimately and logically wondering why the numbers are so unbalanced.

I asked the question a number of times without getting an answer. An ecological system is just that: a system. It is a living system, like the human body. I am thinking of the Richelieu River in my riding. A number of other rivers contributed to the flood in my riding. There was the Rivière l'Acadie in Carignan, for example. These rivers are all connected. Although it is not in my riding, the St. Lawrence River is also nearby. Many rivers connect to it and we are wondering whether the Conservatives truly believe that an incident in one of these waterways will not affect the connecting rivers. It is a system. There is a domino effect that cannot be ignored. This is one of the major problems that I see.

I could say a lot more about all the pages of this bill, but I will stop there. In closing, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion with regard to the protection of waterways:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-45, in clause 321, be amended by adding after line 13 on page 291 the following:

The addition of the navigable waters listed below is deemed to be in the public interest and the governor in council shall, by regulation, as soon as is reasonably practicable after the day on which this act receives royal assent, add those navigable waters to the schedule, including, with respect to lakes, their approximate location in latitude and longitude and, with respect to rivers and riverines, the approximate downstream and upstream points, as well as a description of each of those lakes, rivers and riverines, and where more than one lake, river or riverine exists with the same name indicated in the list below, the governor in council shall select one to be added, namely: Burbanks Lake, Mud Lake, Selwyn Lake, Horn Lake, Lac Nesbitt, Redout Lake, Staple Lake, South Nahanni River, Lac D'Aoust, Sled Lake, Lac Basile, Yellowknife River, Healey Lake, Sunny Lake and Loon Lake.

• (1850)

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate my opposition to Bill C-45 and thank you for your patience.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Does the member for Chambly—Borduas have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** There is no consent.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do find it somewhat interesting that New Democratic members are standing up, speaking and then moving a motion for some sort of an amendment. However, when we were in committee, what we saw was a different New Democratic Party. We saw a New Democratic Party that voted over 1,000 times with the Conservatives. We saw a New Democratic Party that voted to limit debate in committee.

My question to the member, now that the New Democratic Party has decided to once again join the Liberal Party in opposition to Bill C-45, is why did he not want to have this sort of debate in committee?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying that we have absolutely no intention of joining the Liberal Party. I want to inform my constituents of that fact, because otherwise, I would never be re-elected. If there is one party that supported the government on several occasions and used the same tactics while it was in power, it is the Liberal Party, which introduced omnibus bills and dipped into the employment insurance fund, among other things.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I would also like to say that we opposed Bill C-45 as soon as we knew about its content, for the reasons mentioned by my colleagues. Moreover, I know very well that my colleagues at the Standing Committee on Finance have done an incredible job, and I have a lot of respect for them. I have no doubt about the work that they have done, and I am sure that we will continue to oppose any budget of this kind.

• (1855)

[*English*]

**Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, colleagues across the way say they want to create jobs, but they are against trade agreements and foreign investments that create jobs, opportunities and growth for Canadians.

I spent nine years on city council in Kelowna. One of the things with the Navigable Waters Protection Act was that it created a very difficult time for our community development. There was bureaucratic duplication.

I would like to quickly read this into the record. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities sent out a news release that said the following:

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities welcomes the federal government's commitment to make the Navigable Waters Protection Act work better for our communities and make it more affordable to build basic infrastructure.

Why does the NDP oppose local governments across Canada? Why does it not support our communities in creating jobs and growth?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I would not dare to speak for the ridings of other colleagues, but I will certainly speak for mine. I am a member of the chambers of commerce in my riding. Regarding investment, I can say that those chambers of commerce are quite happy about what the NDP is proposing in terms of investment and economic policy.

As for navigable waters, I mentioned some rivers in my riding and talked about their environmental value, but they also have an economic value. The government provided no help to deal with floods. Help came from the community, and we saw how important it is to have a framework in place for our bodies of water in order to ensure the well-being of our community. That is why the community wants to keep those protections, and why I wish to oppose Bill C-45.

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague. Earlier today, I, too, tried in vain to ask the House for unanimous consent to add the rivers in my riding to the list of protected rivers. The Conservatives refused. I would like to ask my colleague why the Conservatives are refusing to protect my riding's rivers?

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I unfortunately do not have the answer. Just like my colleague, I tried to ask this question and to figure it out. If the constituents of my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord had the answers, they would not have voted for a member who has better proposals with respect to environmental protection and the economy. That is the important thing. There is nothing that says we cannot protect the environment and have good economic conditions at the same time. That is what we are proposing, but it is not in the budget.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, would the member like to comment on the recent statement of the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the government's projection of revenues is in fact \$4.7 billion lower than his projection, that the budget will be balanced by 2014-15 and that the \$5.2 billion cutbacks in services and employment, with 19,000 employees, built into the budget are not necessary at all?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Not only do we have figures from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, but it seems that even the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance cannot get their stories straight. How far does this lack of consistency reach when it comes to the budget and the cuts? Perhaps the cuts are not needed. On this side of the House, we have never believed that such sweeping cuts were necessary.

People who work in the public service are worried because of the uncertainty, as are the people who use these services. They are having to use food banks and ask for help from local organizations, which are doing the work the government should be doing because it receives people's tax dollars. Why are local organizations being saddled with more work when the government is quite capable of providing this assistance?

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again, I have no choice but to rise before the House to ask for more of an explanation regarding some issues that Canadians are deeply concerned about. Why must I raise this again?

The answer is simple. In question period, the Conservatives continue to spew the same old rhetoric, which involves trying to convince Canadians of their good intentions by using arguments that are far from accurate. Canadians are fed up with ready-made talking points. They want real answers. Can the government carry out this simple task? That is what we will find out here today.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

In September, I rose in the House to ask two questions. First I asked the government why it had not bothered to consult the people who would be affected by the employment insurance reforms, in other words, workers, employers and the unemployed. After all, they are the ones who pay for the program, so it only makes sense to consult them if decisions are being made about managing their money differently, which is what should happen in any proper consultation process.

Now we know that the government never bothered to consult workers before cramming this counter-reform down their throats. Moreover, the Conservatives never deigned to meet and consult with the provinces on this issue, one that will have a significant impact on their respective budgets and their residents. Quebec even passed unanimous motions, twice in fact, to denounce this unilateral and very cowardly act against Canadian workers. I need not remind the government that it is the workers who pay their premiums in good faith and expect that insurance will be available for them when they need it.

To the first question, the government simply repeated the answer, the one it has given again and again to all legitimate questions that we have asked them about jobs and economic growth, that they have created so many new jobs and that the NDP wants to impose a carbon tax that will cost \$21 billion. I wonder about the pertinence of this answer. Why do the Conservatives raise false allegations and hide behind disputable job creation numbers? The question is simple: where is the government's accountability toward the public? Is there a single member on the other side of the House who can give an appropriate and pertinent answer to a simple and totally legitimate question?

I am not talking about creating 770,000 jobs and I am not talking about the carbon tax. I am asking once again why no workers, no employers, no unemployed people, no advocacy groups, why no provinces were consulted when changes were being made to the employment insurance system.

To my second question, once again I asked for clear and simple information: why are the Conservatives punishing the people who are eligible for the working while on claim pilot project?

These people, who have already had the misfortune of losing their jobs—and we know this is not their fault—are desperately trying to stay connected to the labour market while continuing their job search. With the recalculation, they are being penalized still further, so that the vast majority of part-time workers earning a small salary are losing out.

What answer were Canadians given? That the unemployed workers who work harder will keep even more of their income. Then, the government went so far as to accuse the NDP of voting against job creation initiatives. All of Canada now knows that it is not true that those who work harder during their claim period will earn more than under the former system. We know this because the opposition stuck to the facts: calculations have shown that most workers eligible for this pilot project will lose out, so much so that the minister has had to do somewhat of an about face to allow some future unemployed workers to use the old system.

● (1905)

[English]

**Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me assure the member opposite that our government is listening to Canadians, and we did listen to Canadians on the various initiatives set out in the budget implementation act.

The Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, the Minister of State for Seniors and I consulted widely in the lead-up to the budget. In fact, last year I was pleased to travel with my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, to host round tables on EI rate setting. It was through these consultations that our government confirmed that Canadians want stable predictable EI premium rates and a transparent rate-setting process. In response to our consultations, our government introduced legislation this year to ensure predictability and stability in the EI premium rate setting.

In addition, I was also pleased to be involved in our government's consultations with medical specialists and stakeholders regarding the new EI benefit for parents of critically ill children.

[Translation]

Consultations are an integral part of the business we are in. They provide valuable input into the decision-making process.

[English]

The economic growth seen under our government's leadership is only possible by working in partnership with Canadians.

[Translation]

Consulting with stakeholders is not only an option for us. It is an essential step in the development of sound program and policy decisions.

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Mr. Speaker, no matter what the Conservatives respond—and this is a fact—Canada is facing an unprecedented situation in which its own government is directly targeting workers who have the misfortune of losing their job.

Whether we are talking about seasonal industries in the Maritimes, remote regions in Quebec or regions affected by problems in the manufacturing industry in Ontario, families are having a hard time making ends meet. This government is gradually dismantling the diversified economy and the entire social safety net that we have spent years building and that we are very proud of as a country.

Will the minister drop the pretense and admit that the EI reforms will hurt workers and our economy? Does she have something better to offer these workers who pay taxes, contribute to the EI fund along with employers, and need support when they are struggling because of the global economic downturn or because it is wintertime? People who pay into the employment insurance fund should be entitled to employment insurance.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[English]

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that sound policies come from inclusive decision making, and we are seeing results.

[Translation]

We are proud to have seen over 820,000 jobs created since the end of the economic recession.

[English]

Our government is working to help Canadians in local areas find jobs appropriate to their qualifications. At the same time, we recognize that Canadians are having difficulty finding work, particularly in the off-season in parts of the country where much of the economy is based on seasonal industries.

For those who are unable to find employment, employment insurance will be there for them, as it always has been.

[Translation]

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my leader gave me a new responsibility in May, that of the Liberal advocate for co-operatives in Canada. One of the first things I did in that capacity was to propose the creation of a committee to the House. This committee was created once unanimous consent was given in late May.

In July, the committee held five days of hearings and, on September 17, we tabled a report in the House. We hope to have an answer from the government in mid-January.

One of the six recommendations, which were unanimously supported, involved the need to capitalize co-operatives. A short time later, in early October, I participated in the International Summit of Cooperatives, the most important event of the year for co-operatives, which was held in Quebec City. Three hundred of the largest co-operatives in the world were there, as well as nearly 3,000 participants. We had the opportunity to hear about and examine many of the challenges and great successes of the co-operative community, both in Canada and abroad.

During the summit, an announcement was made that piqued my curiosity. This announcement tied the Government of Quebec and, indirectly, the Government of Canada, to the creation of a \$30 million fund for the development and expansion of Quebec co-operatives.

The Government of Quebec contributed \$4 million to it, the organization of co-operatives in Quebec invested \$1 million and the Mouvement Desjardins put in \$10 million, for a total of \$15 million. On the federal side, the Business Development Bank of Canada, the BDC, committed \$10 million, and the CFDCs and BDCs provided \$5 million. Altogether, that comes to a \$30 million envelope.

Not long after that, I asked the minister a question, and in response to his answer I requested that the debate be extended. I congratulated the government when I asked my question, because I thought this was a welcome initiative, given co-operatives' crying need for capitalization, which the committee had identified over the summer.

I therefore asked whether we could expect similar announcements for other provinces of Canada, since the BDC is a federal institution.

I did not receive a satisfactory reply, and so I want to come back to this issue this evening, because afterward, I met with representatives of the Business Development Bank of Canada, who were very affable and very open. They told me about certain restrictions they were having to deal with under their mandate.

And this prompts me to ask the parliamentary secretary who is speaking for the government tonight when we can expect to see a review of the BDC's mandate.

By law, the mandate was to be reviewed in 2010. I think that if we look to the recommendations made by the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, the banking committee, we would see that there is in fact a need to amend the BDC's mandate to make sure it is able to do in other provinces of Canada what it has done in Quebec, at least according to the announcement that was made.

That is essentially the reason why I am here this evening. I would like the government to tell me when we can expect it to be reviewing the mandate of the BDC.

• (1910)

[English]

**Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Cooperatives are important economic drivers that support development in all regions of Canada. Our government is taking decisive steps to ensure that Canadian cooperatives can prosper.

Industry Canada offers an array of services to support small businesses and cooperatives, including training, information and funding. For example, the Canada small business financing program seeks to increase the availability of loans to establish, expand, modernize and improve small businesses.

The Business Development Bank of Canada also provides support to small and medium-sized businesses. The BDC has provided financing to cooperatives in the past and will continue to do so. The BDC partners with the Canadian Youth Business Foundation to extend its reach to small businesses. The CYBF is an important source of financing and support for young entrepreneurs, including those within cooperatives.

The Canada Business Network is a multi-channel government information service for start-up entrepreneurs and cooperatives, as well as small businesses.

Cooperatives can also access BizPal, an online service that provides corporations with information on the registration and licenses needed to start and operate a business.

In addition, regional development agencies and the innovation commercialization program, with an initial commitment of \$40 million, aim to help demonstrate new products developed by Canadian small businesses and cooperatives.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Quebec cooperatives are a significant source of lending for small and medium-sized business. They have an important role to play in fostering the economic and social fabric of Quebec and are a major source of job creation. As the member opposite noted, the Quebec government recently announced its intention to create a Fonds de co-investissement COOP financing alliance. This alliance would foster the development of cooperatives in Quebec. More specifically, it would increase and simplify the access to financing for cooperatives in the province. The BDC is one of the members that will participate in this worthwhile initiative.

In 2012, the International Year of Cooperatives, it is particularly important to take note of the many initiatives that Canada has in place to foster the development of cooperatives. I encourage the member opposite to look to those opportunities that are available to cooperatives across the entire country.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague to focus on the one question that I raised tonight. I do not expect her to have an answer for me this evening, as that would be unfair, but I hope she will bring this message back to her colleagues and the relevant minister.

The BDC, in its participation in Quebec, which she mentioned, is restricted because it cannot invest indirectly or lend indirectly. It has to do so directly. The \$10 million figure is basically a commitment to

further loans. The BDC will not put money into funds. It took me a while to get that information. The answer to allowing the BDC to do this, either in Quebec or in other provinces, would be to review the mandate of the BDC.

When can we expect the government to review the mandate of the BDC, as the law requires? The law says that in 2010 a review was to be initiated. I am not expecting an answer but I hope the message will be conveyed to the government.

● (1915)

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, cooperatives are important economic drivers that support development in all regions of our country and our government is taking decisive steps to support them.

I appreciate the member opposite's comments and questions. I will be happy to relay them to the government.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:16 p.m.)

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