



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 011 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, October 30, 2013

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 30, 2013

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for St. Paul's.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

SUPREME COURT OF CANADA

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again Conservatives, Liberals and New Democrats have failed to show respect for Quebeckers.

By appointing a judge to the Supreme Court who is supposed to be from Quebec but does not meet the basic criteria or even live in Quebec, the federal government failed in its duty to respect Quebec's separate legal system.

By including Justice Nadon in the list of the top three candidates, Liberals and New Democrats also participated in this pathetic ploy. Considering they once recommended a unilingual anglophone judge, we should not have been surprised. Furthermore, none of them stood up for Quebec's historical position that Quebec judges on the Supreme Court should be appointed from a list submitted by Quebec.

Yesterday, the Quebec National Assembly unanimously denounced the federal government's unilateral actions in appointing Justice Nadon and condemned the fact that this decision is depriving Quebec of one-third of its representation on the Supreme Court, just as important cases are being considered.

The Quebec nation's civil code and fundamental rights deserve respect. The federalist parties here in this House have still not figured this out, unfortunately.

[*English*]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in September, I was honoured to host an all-party aerospace caucus tour in Manitoba during Aerospace Week, celebrating over 75 years of industry excellence.

The aerospace industry is very important to the economy and to the people in my riding of Winnipeg South Centre. In fact, key employees from Magellan and Boeing live just down the street from my home.

The industry is near and dear to my heart, because it has created partnerships with educational institutions, delivering training to students, who become immediately employable. I know a number of the 5,500 people who are employed by Manitoba's more than 40 aerospace related businesses. I have had a chance to speak with many of these hard-working Canadians, and they appreciate the investments our government is making in the industry.

I commend the work being done by the aerospace industry in Manitoba. I am thrilled that the industry is creating jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity for my constituents.

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[*Translation*]

DISARMAMENT WEEK

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is Disarmament Week.

Canada was once a leader in disarmament issues. Take, for example, the motion that was unanimously adopted by the House in 2010 regarding nuclear disarmament and the Ottawa convention on anti-personnel mines.

Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. With Bill C-6, the Conservatives are undermining the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Cluster munitions primarily kill civilians.

Canada is withdrawing from the Arms Trade Treaty, which 114 countries, including the United States, have signed. What is more, last week we learned that this government is easing controls on Canadian military equipment exports. I could go on.

Unlike the Conservatives, the NDP wants to build a safer world through multilateralism and conflict prevention.

Have a good Disarmament Week.

*Statements by Members**[English]***DAVID ERNEST HORNELL**

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to recognize the valour of David Ernest Hornell, a native son from Mimico in my constituency of Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

Flight Lieutenant Hornell was a brave leader who successfully completed 60 missions with the RCAF around Iceland, Scotland, and Canada's east coast during World War II. In 1944 he was aircraft captain on a patrol near the Faroe Islands when his plane was attacked and badly damaged by a German U-boat. Nevertheless, he succeeded in delivering his depth charges on target, sinking the submarine, and then brought his plane down, ablaze, on the heavy seas.

There was only one serviceable dinghy, which could not hold all eight members of his crew, so they took turns in the water. At one point, Hornell had to be restrained by his comrades when, though at the end of his own strength, he proposed to swim to a distant lifeboat that had been dropped from the air. When the survivors were rescued after 21 hours, Hornell was weak from exposure. He died shortly thereafter. He was awarded posthumously the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to Commonwealth forces.

This Remembrance Day, let us remember all those who, like David Hornell, died in the name of freedom.

* * *

DAVID LING

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to David Ling, who recently passed away.

Losing his own dad at a young age, he helped his mother keep the family together and kept the original farm operating to provide.

David and his wife Edith built their farm in North Winsloe, originally as commercial farmers and later specializing in beef as pioneers of Prince Edward Island's organic farming industry. He and his wife created a successful organic farming operation. They became a mainstay, selling beef, pork, and produce at the Charlottetown Farmers' Market, with hundreds of happy customers.

He saw himself as a steward of the land and never stopped trying to find new ways to improve organic farming practices. A long-term member of the NFU, he stood up consistently for the rights of farmers. His legacy is "how to nurture and treasure the land, water, and environment", and his drive was "to share what he learned with other farmers in the hope that they would catch the visions too"

We give our regards to his wife Edith, daughters Lisa and Kathy, and special granddaughter Ella. We thank David.

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● (1410)

MISSISSAUGA LEGENDS ROW

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the creation of Legends Row, Mississauga's walk of fame, where we have paid tribute to the

achievements of the many distinguished Mississaugans, past and present.

It was a pleasure to recently attend the Legends Row inaugural induction ceremony, where ten accomplished residents of Mississauga were honoured. This year's inductees included Bruce McLaughlin, Johnny Bower, Chuck Jackson, Oscar Peterson, Silken Laumann, members of the Canadian rock band, Triumph, Lata Pata, Paul Henderson, Dr. Joseph Wong, and Tommy Hunter. Through their actions and accomplishments, these individuals, such as Triumph band member and founder of Mississauga's Metalworks Studios and Metalworks Institute, Gil Moore, have contributed to the economic and cultural success of Mississauga and Canada.

Congratulations to Mississauga's legends.

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*[Translation]***EMPLOYMENT**

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show my support for the 90 workers in Baie-Comeau who lost their jobs, as well as the members of the Unifor local who were forced to accept the cuts imposed by their employer, Resolute Forest Products.

The Conservatives can boast all they like about how they have championed job creation and economic growth, but all evidence points to the contrary. More and more jobs are being lost, and workers like those at the Baie-Comeau paper mill are being forced to accept inferior working conditions.

Over the past five years, over 1,000 high-quality jobs have been lost at the two largest private employers in Baie-Comeau alone. Furthermore, this morning we learned that Alcoa, the city's largest employer, is threatening to shut down its plant and lay off 1,000 workers as early as November 2014.

I would also like to reiterate the NDP's commitment to helping businesses across Canada remain competitive and to ensuring high-paying, sustainable, high-quality jobs for Canadian workers, including young Canadians. The very survival of our regions is at stake.

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*[English]***REMEMBRANCE DAY**

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 11, I would like to invite the people of St. Catharines to join me at the newly restored downtown cenotaph to honour the wartime sacrifices of veterans, like the soldiers of the local Lincoln and Welland Regiment, who liberated the strategically vital Dutch city of Bergen-op-Zoom in October, 1944.

Statements by Members

Throughout wars in Europe, Korea, and Afghanistan, Canadian soldiers have fought for freedom and justice, and their service allows Canada to be one of the most peaceful and prosperous nations in the world. On Remembrance Day, we owe it to them, ordinary men and women like any of us, who left their homes and families behind to face extraordinary risks so that they could protect us from some of the most dangerous threats in our history, to honour those sacrifices.

We appreciate their courage, their commitment, and their love of country. Canadians will always and forever remember their sacrifice.

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CHINA AND MONGOLIA

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was an honour to accompany the Governor General on his state visit to China and Mongolia. His Excellency has always been a strong advocate for academic excellence. We were able to expand upon the person-to-person collaborations not only with political figures but with educators and students.

Having been an educator for 34 years, I was proud to see the enthusiasm shown by our hosts regarding the use of the Canadian curriculum at all levels of education. The same sense of pride was evident when discussing economic issues and how central Alberta businesses, as well as organizations such as Access Prosperity and Alberta's post-secondary institutions, can benefit from this renewed co-operation.

Our numerous round table discussions allowed us to expand and strengthen our economic, cultural, and knowledge-based collaboration. Our discussions with Canadian businesses and NGO leaders helped to enforce just how well Canada is perceived in China, Mongolia, and throughout the world.

* * *

WINDSOR ROTARIANS

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my best wishes to a group of Windsor Rotarians who are preparing for a 13-day November visit to Africa. They are to assist in numerous development and humanitarian projects designed to help Ghana's most vulnerable and impoverished citizens.

Led by a doctor and a group of nurses, a dozen Windsorites are about to change the lives of hundreds of Ghanaians by digging water wells and building schools, libraries, and in particular, an intensive care unit for newborns. They will be distributing mosquito nets, providing eye exams and prescription glasses, and handing out soccer balls and uniforms, which were donated by Windsor's youth.

The Rotarians remind us that our lives need not be dominated by bad news all day. Good news and good deeds are still very much part of the Canadian fabric. Pride in community and a willingness to serve still resonate across our country.

On behalf of all parliamentarians, we wish them safe travel and a safe return.

●(1415)

PERSONS CASE AWARDS

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week the Governor General presented the 2013 Persons Case Awards to five outstanding individuals who had advanced equality for women in our country.

This year's recipients are Constance Backhouse and Julie Lalonde from Ottawa, Nahanni Fontaine from Winnipeg, Susan Shiner from St. John's, and Cherry Smiley from Vancouver.

These women's scholarly work has contributed to ending violence against aboriginal women, ending sexual assault and harassment and supporting safety for women and girls in Canada.

I join with all Canadians to congratulate this year's Persons Case Award winners and I thank all of those who, like them, work in their own community to support equality for women across our great country.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago we heard the news that Canada ranked 20th in the world for gender equality. While some may have been shocked, too many Canadian women know this to be their reality.

One way women experience inequality is through violence perpetrated against them because they are women.

Today I had the honour of announcing our national tour to listen and consult Canadian women with my Motion No. 444, which calls on the federal government to enact a national action plan to address violence against women.

In speaking of gender-based violence, we must remember two things: one, ending violence against women is possible; and two, Canadian women have the absolute right to live in dignity without violence.

Today I had the honour of standing with some of the strongest advocates for women's rights in the country. We heard from Kate McInturff from the CCPA, who said that the problem of violence in women's lives came at too great a cost of all Canadians to bear. Intimate partner violence costs us \$7.4 billion a year and sexual assault \$546 million.

Indigenous women, racialized women, all women in Canada know that an end to violence against women is needed. We need an action plan to end violence against women.

*Statements by Members***LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Mr. Chungsen Leung (Willowdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, families in my riding of Willowdale want safer streets for their children. That is why they are shocked by the Liberal leader's priority to legalize marijuana.

He claims that making pot legal would make it more difficult for children to access drugs, pointing to the regulation of alcohol as an example. Parents in my community see through the Liberal leader's rhetoric.

We know that according to the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse, teens are twice as likely to have consumed alcohol in the last year than pot. Regulated rules for alcohol do not prevent teens from getting access to it, just like the Liberals' plan to legalize marijuana will not make it tougher for our kids to access drugs. In fact, it will do just the opposite.

By sending the message that recreational drug use is acceptable, the leader of the Liberal Party is once again showing us that he lacks the judgment to lead. Clearly he is in over his head.

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CO-OP WEEK

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. speaker, Reverend Moses Coady started the co-operative movement many years ago during the depression in Cape Breton. This effort helped rural communities across the Maritimes to improve their economic and social circumstances.

Mr. Coady led a movement that spread across Canada and around the world. Today, co-operatives in Cape Breton are thriving.

Two weeks ago, our co-operatives' advocate, the member for Ottawa—Vanier, travelled around my riding in celebrating Co-op Week. My colleague accompanied me to credit unions, co-op grocery stores, the United Farmers Co-op country store, the Bras d'Or Farmers Vegetable Co-op, and the Victoria Fisheries Co-op in Neil's Harbour.

There are 9,000 co-ops across the country, with 14 in Cape Breton.

As rural Canada continues to struggle with economic hardships and out-migration, the co-operative movement, with more assistance from the federal government, could help them prosper.

I support my colleague's efforts to create a special parliamentary committee to determine the needs of Canada's co-operatives so we can help build on this model for many years to come.

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MIDDLE EAST

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, UN special rapporteur Richard Falk has shown his biased, ill-informed and, frankly, anti-Semitic views regarding the Middle East peace talks. His recent comments threatening the state of Israel with sanction at the International Court of Justice are totally unhelpful and do nothing to help the Middle East peace process. Those comments actually poison the environment for peace.

Canada has been clear on this issue. We believe in a two-state solution where final status issues are to be resolved directly between the two parties without preconditions, but which also recognizes the right of the state of Israel to live in peace and security.

Richard Falk's latest rantings come from the same man who implied that the Boston terrorist attacks this past spring were somehow the fault of the U.S. and of Israel.

Mr. Falk must resign from his role at the UN because his continued service damages the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and damages what little credibility Mr. Falk and the UN still have.

I also call on the leaders of the NDP, the Liberal Party, the Bloc Québécois, and the Green Party to make their views on Richard Falk public. Do they stand with our government or do they accept Mr. Falk's remarks?

* * *

● (1420)

ETHICS

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with a tip of the hat to Aaron Wherry, I would like to tell a story about the world's most intriguing pizza shop.

Mr. Prime was selected to manage the shop by Mr. and Mrs. Canuck, the owners. Let us call him the prime manager. He had been having trouble with his drivers Mike, Pam and Patrick, apparently caught stealing from the cash register, right under the nose of his night manager, Nigel. Nigel even gave one of them money to pay back what he stole.

Nigel was an honourable man who resigned, except when he was fired. Nigel acted alone, except when he was helped by a few, like Chris the cashier and Art the accountant. Dave, Marj and Carol all know they are the prime manager's buddies. They sit in the corner and eat pizza all day.

Now Mr. and Mrs. Canuck are fed up with these changing stories. Fortunately for them, they can trust honest Tom to hold the prime manager to account and take over the shop in 2015.

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LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been six months since the member for Papineau became Liberal leader. In that time he has announced only one concrete policy he has for Canada, his plan to legalize marijuana.

In contrast, our Conservative government has been getting things done for Canadians. We have signed the biggest free trade deal since NAFTA, begun efforts to provide more fairness in competition for consumers, and maintained our laser-like focus on jobs, growth and long-term prosperity. We are opening the market to 500 million new consumers.

While we have been focused on the economy, the leader of the Liberal Party has been focused on legalizing drugs. His plan will make marijuana easily available to our children and will increase risk of disruption in our communities.

Our Prime Minister will keep illegal drugs off our streets. Clearly, the leader of the Liberal Party is out of touch with law-abiding Canadians.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the Prime Minister a chance to be crystal clear and to give a straight answer. Did his chief of staff, Nigel Wright, resign or was he dismissed by the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wright and I both agreed that his actions were completely inappropriate. That is why he is no longer working for us. He has accepted the responsibility for his actions. He is being held accountable. Obviously when things like this happen, we would expect the other side of the transaction, Mr. Duffy, to do the same. That has not been done and that is why he should be removed from the public payroll.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, why is the Prime Minister so afraid to answer such a simple question?

[Translation]

The question was crystal clear. Did Nigel Wright resign or was he dismissed by the Prime Minister? The Prime Minister has told us two versions of the same story. It is impossible for both to be true.

Which is it? Why does the Prime Minister not tell us what really happened? Why does he not tell Canadians the truth for once?

[English]

The Speaker: I would urge all members, certain statements like that which have an implication that a minister or member is not telling the truth have been found to be unparliamentary.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

[Translation]

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the facts are very clear. Mr. Wright's actions are unacceptable and that is why he is no longer working for me. He is no longer on the public payroll and, for that reason, Mr. Duffy should not be either.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how many cheques were issued by the Prime Minister's lawyers to buy Mike Duffy's silence?

•(1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that allegation is false. I said that it is not unusual for political parties to provide legal assistance to caucus members from time to time.

Oral Questions

[English]

It is the case, as I said yesterday, that all political parties do provide legal assistance to their members. I believe that is done in his party as well.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, is negotiating a \$90,000 backroom deal to buy the silence of a senator a valid legal expense?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think I have been very clear that my view was that Mr. Duffy should repay his expenses, expenses he took inappropriately from the taxpayers of Canada. That is not the obligation of the Conservative Party and Mr. Duffy has not yet done that. The fact of the matter is that parties do assist their members in good standing from time to time with legal expenses. In fact, it is the case.

The member can confirm it is the case that his political party has on a number of occasions provided him with substantial legal assistance.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what work was done by the law firm Nelligan O'Brien Payne to earn a \$13,000 cheque from the Prime Minister's lawyers?

[English]

Exactly what work was done by the law firm Nelligan O'Brien Payne on behalf of the Prime Minister to merit seeing members of the Conservative Party pay \$13,000 to that firm? How is that possible? What real work was done if it were a valid legal expense?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party, as do other parties, provide legal assistance to their members of Parliament.

In the case of the leader of the NDP, it is my understanding, and he can confirm, that not only has his party in the past paid for certain legal expenses, it even paid findings of wrongdoing against him by a court of law. The party paid almost \$100,000 in damages on his behalf. Could he confirm that?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Wascana now has the floor and I would like to hear him.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says on February 13 he ordered Mike Duffy to repay his expenses, but from that date until May 15, three full months, we are told the Prime Minister was never briefed on his hand-picked star senator, nor did he ask any questions. During that time, \$90,000 in hush money was paid, plus \$13,000 in legal fees, a Deloitte audit was subverted, a Senate report was corrupted, and a false story was concocted about a bank mortgage.

When did the Prime Minister first hear that his staff, for which he is accountable, had counselled Mike Duffy to lie?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has already answered that question.

Oral Questions

At the same time, the Liberal position on this is truly unbelievable. The Liberals are trying to make victims out of these three senators and disgraced Liberal senator Mac Harb. They stole hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars. It is inappropriate and Canadians have been quite clear. They cannot accept accountability through an election, so they want us to do that accountability. That is why there is a motion in front of the Senate now to expel these three senators without pay and that is why we are going to move forward with that. I only hope that the Liberals and the NDP will come on board and help us get that accountability.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did not answer the last question. Let us see if he will answer this one.

From May 15 to May 19, the Prime Minister said he had full confidence in Nigel Wright. He called him an honourable man showing leadership. He said he was just protecting taxpayers, just helping a dear old friend. Then suddenly Mr. Wright was thrown under the bus with Duffy. What changed?

What new information did the Prime Minister receive in those five days, from Wednesday to Sunday, that transformed Mr. Wright from being a brilliant chief of staff into a base manipulator who had to be fired?

• (1430)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Nigel Wright has accepted full and sole responsibility for his actions. He knows that what he did was inappropriate. At the same time, the Prime Minister has said quite clearly that had he known this was taking place, he would have in no way approved of such action.

While the Liberal leader is talking about pipes in his token role as Liberal leader, we are talking about pipelines. We are talking about growing the economy. Those are the things that Canadians want us to talk about and those are the things we are going to continue to concentrate on as we go forward.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are deeply troubled by the Prime Minister's incredible excuses and maybe it is because of the track record. They recall that illegal in-and-out financing scam on the Prime Minister's watch, a police raid, charges laid, a guilty plea, a conviction and the biggest possible fine; then the illegal conduct that cost him a cabinet minister in Labrador; now the charges laid in Peterborough, robocalls, voter suppression, electoral fraud, that deal to get rid of Alan Riddell, and of course, the Prime Minister on tape about an insurance policy for Chuck Cadman. Is there a pattern here?

The Speaker: It seems there is not a great deal in that question about actual government business. I heard a lot of questions about party business, which there have been previous speakers on, but I see the hon. parliamentary secretary rising. I will allow him to answer.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this would be a good time to give another story. I know how fond the House is of stories.

I have two daughters, a seven-year-old and a five-year-old, two beautiful girls, Natalie and Olivia, and each week I give them an allowance. Part of that allowance might be for cleaning their rooms.

Both Natalie and Olivia know that sometimes their mother might clean their rooms. They both know that they should not ask for an allowance because they did not actually do the work. If my five-year-old and seven-year-old can figure this out, how is it that these senators cannot figure it out and how is it that the opposition supports that type of activity from our senators?

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if, as the Prime Minister says, he does not defend the actions of Mr. Duffy, why then is he literally paying to defend the actions of Mr. Duffy?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, all political parties will provide legal assistance to members of its caucus in good standing.

If the Leader of the Opposition thinks this is a problem, why would he have his party not only pay his legal expenses but even pay nearly \$100,000 of wrongdoing damages imposed by a court of law? Why?

That is something the Conservative Party certainly does not do. Why did he do it?

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, well now that he has told us what they does not do, let us look at what they does do.

Senator Duffy announced that he would repay his expenses on February 22. His expenses were paid back on March 26, more than a month later.

What was negotiated between the Prime Minister's own lawyers and Mike Duffy's lawyers during that month?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I have been very clear. I said that Mr. Duffy should repay the expenses himself, expenses he had inappropriately claimed from the Senate for expenses he had never in fact incurred. That was the position.

My understanding, the understanding of this caucus and the entire Canadian public, was that Mr. Duffy had indeed repaid those expenses himself. That proved not to be the truth.

Mr. Wright, who paid them on his behalf, is no longer on the public payroll. Mr. Duffy should not be on the public payroll, and neither should other senators who have behaved inappropriately as well.

• (1435)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how many people knew that lawyers from the Prime Minister's Office and the Conservative Party were negotiating that deal with Mike Duffy?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, Mr. Wright has not only been very clear. He has been very clear about his sole responsibility and his dealings with others on this matter. He is being held accountable for that.

Oral Questions

I wonder how many members of the NDP are aware that this party leader not only claims expenses for court cases he loses but also expects his political party to actually pay, for him, the damages imposed by a court of law.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that the Conservative Party fund approved paying Mike Duffy's legal bills for this deal.

How could someone at the Conservative Party approve paying Duffy's legal bills if Nigel Wright acted alone?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, that question has been clearly answered.

What is not, of course, being answered is why in fact the Leader of the Opposition keeps changing his own story.

Yesterday he got up in this place and said that Mr. Duffy was the victim of extortion because people were trying to get him to pay back monies he never should have claimed in the first place. We expected Mr. Duffy to repay his money, just like I think his own party would expect him to repay damages in court.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned for your safety, in that you might be impaled on the Prime Minister's increasing proboscis.

Did the Prime Minister offer Mike Duffy a guarantee that in turn for going along with the repayment scheme, the Conservative-controlled Senate would let him off the hook?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what the question is there. I am reminded by that particular statement that the finding against the Leader of the Opposition was for libel.

Our view is very clear. The Senate has a choice in front of it. It has a motion in front of it. That motion suggests and says that the three senators who have clearly abused the public trust on these matters should be taken off the Senate payroll. On this side of the House, we firmly agree with that motion.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is why the previous, clear question was so important and that is why Canadians notice that the Prime Minister did not answer it. I will repeat it.

Did the Prime Minister's Office offer Mike Duffy a guarantee that in return for going along with the repayment scheme, the Conservative-controlled Senate would let him off the hook?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I think has been illustrated many times, the Senate makes its own decisions in these matters. Senator Tkachuk, the chair of the committee, has been very clear that this is the case. It is also clear that we do not always agree with those decisions.

However, it is very clear what we expect in this particular case. There has been a breach of public trust, claiming expenses to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars that should never have been claimed, and there should be appropriate action taken to remove those senators from the public payroll.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that would be an independent Senate. Let us look at an email exchange from February 11.

Mike Duffy to Nigel Wright, "What does Marjory's letter mean for our talks?"

Nigel Wright to Mike Duffy, "I had no foreknowledge of it. When I learned of it I asked for all unilateral action from [the Senate leader's] office to cease before being cleared with me."

That is Senate independence? They were controlling it out of his office.

• (1440)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Senate committee that the member refers to was the committee of Senator Tkachuk, not Senator LeBreton, who was the government leader in the Senate. The Senate made its own decisions. The Senate has been very clear on that matter. We believe, to be very clear about this, that the senators, having failed to repay any expenses they took inappropriately in due course, should be removed from the public payroll.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, can the Prime Minister explain the difference between Senator Patrick Brazeau's illegal expense claims and the equally illegal claims made by his close friend, Carolyn Stewart Olsen?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is making allegations against people without having all the facts.

[*English*]

It is really interesting to see the comportment of this particular individual, making allegations without any substantiation against some individuals, against some senators.

However, at the same time, when he is actually caught doing that and convicted in court for having done that, he then expects his political party to pay the fines and the damages for him. That is the kind of person we are dealing with over there.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, actually, Carolyn Stewart Olsen admits that she wrongly charged taxpayers, and an admission is indeed the best form of evidence.

If she also wrongly charged taxpayers, exactly like Patrick Brazeau, the only question that remains is this. Why is she still sitting in the Senate? Why not the same treatment for her?

The only answer that we know is that she is very close to the Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, that allegation is made without any facts, without any information, without any substantiation.

Oral Questions

I go once again. If the leader of the NDP thinks it is so inappropriate for a political party to assist its members with financial expenses, why would he not pay back those expenses to his party? In fact, why would he not admit to asking his political party to pay nearly \$100,000 in a court-determined wrongdoing on his behalf? Why would he not admit that is wrong and commit himself to repaying the money to his party?

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has confirmed what Mike Duffy disclosed, that the Conservative Party has paid \$13,000 in legal fees related to his bogus expenses. That represents hours and hours of lawyers' time, working on a \$90,000 deal and a cover-up with the Prime Minister's Office.

Why is Senator Duffy the only Conservative senator who had his legal fees paid? Is that the price of buying Mr. Duffy's silence about the PMO cover-up?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have said quite clearly, from time to time the party will assist members when they require some legal assistance.

Here again go the Liberals, with their partners the New Democrats, trying to defend these three senators and disgraced Liberal senator Mac Harb, because they took money from the Canadian taxpayers. We know the Liberals are going to defend the status quo constantly. They did that for 30 years with the senator from Puerto Vallarta. We should not expect anything different.

If only these Liberals were as passionate about repaying their illegal campaign contributions, then maybe we would make some progress, at least on one file.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party covered Mike Duffy's legal fees in relation to his fraudulent expenses. Writing a cheque to cover expenses does not cost \$13,000. This is proof of direct negotiations with the PMO to organize and cover up this scandal.

If the Prime Minister thinks that Mike Duffy's behaviour is unacceptable, why is he the only Conservative whose legal fees the party covered?

Exactly how much did the Conservatives pay to buy Mike's Duffy's silence?

•(1445)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, from time to time of course we do assist caucus members who require legal assistance.

Let me say this again, just in passing. I have another story, because I know how much we like them. One of the first things I taught my daughters when they could speak was their address, so that if they got lost, they would know to tell the police or anybody where they lived.

Only the Liberals and the New Democrats are standing up for people who clearly do not even know where they live. These are

people elevated to the Senate. I will let them stand up for those people. We will stand up for the taxpayers who want accountability, and that motion would bring it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one believes the Prime Minister.

Canadians are not fools. They do not believe that this extremely controlling Prime Minister knew nothing about the \$90,000 cheque given to Mike Duffy or about the 13 seasoned employees who were covering up the scandal.

If the Prime Minister was so angry about Mike Duffy's expenses, why did he authorize the Conservative Party to pay his \$13,000 legal fees?

When will the Prime Minister testify under oath about this Conservative scandal?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only the Liberals would stand up for three senators and disgraced Liberal senator Mac Harb, who have admitted they took money that they actually did not earn. Only the Liberals would stand up for those people.

What we want to do is this. We want to pass a motion that would suspend them without pay. We want to do that because Canadians cannot extract accountability from these people by throwing the senators out at the next election; so what Canadians want us to do is to pass this motion. They want the Liberals to get out of the way and let us bring accountability back to the Senate and respect taxpayer dollars, and that is what we will do.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in referring to the Senate, the Prime Minister said, "The time for making apologies over there has long passed".

However, on Friday, Senator Carignan offered Patrick Brazeau a deal if he apologized. Last night Conservative senators were still making deals.

Can the leader of the Conservative Party tell us why we should believe him when his senators are actively doing the opposite of what he says?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now we hear it from the NDP. The New Democrats are also trying to defend these senators.

We are very clear: These senators accepted payments that they did not earn. They did not earn those payments. Not only should they repay those payments, but Canadians expect some level of accountability, and that level of accountability is to pass this motion in the Senate that would suspend them without pay. That is what Canadians want. That is what the overwhelming majority of the members in this caucus want. Only the Liberals and the New Democrats are defending these four disgraced senators.

Oral Questions

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Deloitte audit into Pamela Wallin included a letter from Senator David Tkachuk. He advised Ms. Wallin to withhold information from auditors, saying, "...she should restrict herself to the information that auditors asked for...". In other words, do not co-operate any more than absolutely necessary.

Did Senator Tkachuk speak with anyone in the Prime Minister's Office about providing this advice to Pamela Wallin?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the issue here is that these three senators and disgraced Liberal Senator Mac Harb accepted thousands of dollars in expenses that they did not earn. That is the issue.

As I said yesterday, if Eugene can figure it out, and if my daughters Natalie and Olivia can figure it out, surely the NDP members can hear what all Canadians are saying, that they want accountability and they want us to pass this motion in the Senate that would suspend these senators without pay. They cannot get that from electing these senators because they have not allowed us to pass that bill, but they can expect that from us here if they would get out of the way and let us pass that motion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that we should trust Mike Duffy implicitly, but at least he, unlike the Prime Minister, has proof to back up his stories. That is how we found out about the cheque for \$13,560.

Can the Prime Minister clarify the role that Cassels Brock & Blackwell and Nelligan O'Brien Payne played in the Wright-Duffy affair?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there go the NDP members again defending poor Senator Mike Duffy. My gosh, Mike Duffy is the guy who called himself the Duffinator. He interviewed the highest people, the most powerful people, but somehow he wants us to believe what the NDP believes, that the only thing he was afraid of were kids in short pants. Give me a break. Somehow he was forced on the ground to accept \$90,000 in expenses that he did not earn. He is the only one who still has not paid a dime for his expenses. He should not be rewarded, as the opposition want, by a seat in the Senate and a paycheque every two weeks.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect for my colleague, in this case, the only ones who are trying to defend anyone are the Conservatives, who are trying to hide and save face.

When the Prime Minister says that this is "why Mr. Duffy should be removed from the Senate", does he mean with or without health care benefits?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to hide and cover things up, how awkward that must be for the member. How awkward it must be for her to ask that question when it was her leader who 17 years ago was offered a bribe, decided to hide that and cover it up for 17 years. Think of what we could have accomplished, what the people of Quebec could have accomplished, if only he would have come clean 17 years ago with the fact that he was offered a bribe from the mayor of Laval. That is called hiding and that is called a cover-up.

* * *

SEALING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the ban on seal products adopted in the European Union was a political decision that has no basis in evidence or science. So too are calls to boycott Canadian seafood because of the seal hunt.

The radical global activists who support such bans claim they abhor eating meat, but they probably all have leather handbags and belts.

This week, Anthony Bourdain stood up for good food and our coastal and Inuit communities. Will the Minister of the Environment comment on Anthony Bourdain's defence of the seal hunt?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that great question.

Opposition to the seal hunt has had a devastating impact on northern and coastal communities. I commend Mr. Bourdain for standing up against a decision that is not based on science. I invite Mr. Bourdain to Nunavut to take part in a traditional feast with country food like seal meat.

Our government will continue to fight for Canadian sealers and their way of life in our rural coastal communities.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on May 19, the Prime Minister stated, "It is with great regret that I have accepted the resignation of Nigel Wright as my chief of staff."

Monday, on the radio program *Maritime Morning*, he said that Mr. Wright was fired. Then, yesterday, all of a sudden it was, "Mr. Wright no longer works for me."

There are a lot of versions. Which is the real one?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Nigel Wright has of course accepted sole and full responsibility for his actions. He knows that what he did was wrong, and he is prepared to accept accountability for that.

Oral Questions

At the same time, the Prime Minister has also mentioned that, had he known, he would have in no way approved such a scheme.

However, we also have an opportunity now to expect accountability from our senators, those senators who accepted funds that they were not entitled to. We need the opposition Liberals in the Senate to get out of the way so we can suspend these senators without pay.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know better. They know very well that the Prime Minister and his entourage tried to hide something from them.

During the briefings on the Senate scandal, the Prime Minister must have known that Nigel Wright did not act alone. He must have known, for example, that Arthur Hamilton, Benjamin Perrin, Ray Novak and Jenni Byrne, among others, were involved.

That being the case, why did the Prime Minister wait until October 24 to confirm that Nigel Wright did not act alone? Why?

•(1455)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I did on Monday, I would refer the hon. member to affidavits that were filed in court.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister changes his story daily on the Senate.

First, only one person knew about the payoff between Nigel Wright and Mike Duffy. Then “a few” did. The Prime Minister first said his chief of staff resigned. Then on Monday he claimed Wright was fired. First we heard about one cheque. Now we hear about two.

Why will the Prime Minister not apologize for misleading Canadians? When will Canadians hear the truth?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Really, Mr. Speaker, the only person changing the story is the Leader of the Opposition who actually said at one point that he did not get a bribe, or he did get a bribe. He had to think about it. Maybe he did; maybe he did not.

Yesterday he said it was inappropriate to get legal expenses paid for, but now we know that he did get them paid for.

The NDP leader is all over the map on this and completely inconsistent. The only thing we want to make sure all Canadians understand is that when it comes to protecting their taxpayer dollars, the moral of the story that I wanted to complete the other day about angry Tom and his three chairs is that we can only depend on the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for that small mercy.

On the one hand, we have unelected Conservative and Liberal senators ripping off taxpayers. On the other hand, we have a Prime Minister's Office coordinating the cover-up and the payoff. Right in the middle of the whole sad affair, we have a Prime Minister refusing to tell Canadians what actually happened.

When the scandal first surfaced, what did the Prime Minister do to fix it? Nothing. When the audit was whitewashed by his senators, what did he do? Nothing, but New Democrats will keep asking the questions until we get the answers Canadians deserve.

If the Conservatives want to stop defending the Senate, they should join us and abolish it.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP does not want to abolish the Senate. The reason we know it does not want to abolish the Senate is that we will be arguing for reform or abolition before the Supreme Court in just a couple of weeks. Does the House know who is not even showing up to make any argument? The NDP.

In fact, the two NDP governments that made any argument at all have argued to make abolition as difficult as possible.

We know the NDP position on the Senate is nothing more than a grand public relations exercise, and it will never deliver. On this side of the House of Commons, just like Eugene, we will deliver.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last June the previous minister of defence said, “Any Afghan vet injured in combat will not be released as a result of those injuries”.

He even went further, “...everyone would be better off if the hon. member had chosen to contact my office...”. Last week we did just that. We contacted the minister's office. It did not help Corporal David Hawkins, who suffered injuries in Afghanistan and was released last Friday with less than a year of service left before he qualifies for a pension.

Will the minister today honour his predecessor's promise and reinstate Corporal Hawkins?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want to thank Corporal Hawkins for his service and sacrifice for Canada.

Before being released, members of the Canadian Armed Forces work with the military on a transition plan. Ill and injured Canadian Forces members are provided with physical, mental and occupational therapy services for their eventual transition to civilian life. Members are not released until they are prepared.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, imagine firing an injured soldier before he is eligible to collect his pension. That is what is happening. Ten years is what it takes to get the pension. People with nine years service are given the pink slip by the Conservative government. That is uncaring, with no compassion whatsoever.

Oral Questions

My question is to the Minister of National Defence. When will the government change its policy to ensure that it is demonstrating respect for members of our Canadian Forces and not denying them the opportunity to have a pension by not allowing them to continue their service in the forces?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member has his facts wrong. In fact, members are not released until they are prepared.

It is pretty hypocritical coming from the member, when his party did nothing to help veterans in the country. It did nothing for the military. That has changed under our government, and I am very proud of that.

* * *

• (1500)

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for over 100 years, Stelco made steel in Hamilton, providing good, high-value jobs. However, when Stelco ran into trouble, it was sold off to U.S. Steel on a solemn promise to maintain jobs and investment in my home town of Hamilton.

The Conservative government then rubber-stamped that U.S. Steel takeover. Well, if it was not obvious before, it certainly is obvious now: U.S. Steel has broken that promise, and we want to know what the government is going to do about it.

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is actually not true. Production is going to continue. This company, U.S. Steel, has had a drop in revenue of 11%. On Monday of this week, it announced a loss of almost \$1.8 billion. That is not something that the government can yell and scream about and correct. There are difficulties in the private sector.

However, one of the things that U.S. Steel manufactures in Canada is steel pipes that are used in pipelines. The NDP comes before the House and says no pipelines to British Columbia, no Keystone XL pipelines, and then comes before the House again and asks what is happening to all the jobs in steel manufacturing. He should talk to his own colleagues.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives will fight to protect the jobs of the senators, but they will not lift a finger to protect the jobs of Hamiltonians.

The fact is, the Conservatives have totally mismanaged foreign investments. They approved the Stelco takeover. They retreated in court when it came to defending jobs, and now they are standing idly by while they shut down the blast furnace permanently. There is no doubt that U.S. Steel broke its promises to Hamilton.

Why will the minister not do his job, stand up to U.S. Steel, and stand up for Canadian workers?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the agreement that we had will keep jobs in Hamilton and keep jobs in Lake Erie. What she is describing is entirely not true with regard to the matter before us.

Again, we have the NDP leader and an NDP environment critic going to Washington, D.C., saying not to approve Keystone, do not approve the Enbridge line, do not approve the Kinder Morgan

pipeline, have no more pipelines, and yet those steel pipelines are actually manufactured in Hamilton and Hamiltonians are losing their jobs. It is little wonder.

It was John Quincy Adams who once said that being all things to all people means being nothing to no one. That is today's NDP.

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HEALTH

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like most Canadians, I have never been one to look forward to the times when I have to visit a hospital. They are places we go to get better and are staffed by qualified people to help us. However, the complicated tasks that they undertake can lead to unintended injuries if we do not ensure we have proper policies to protect patient safety.

Could the Minister Health please inform the House what our government is doing to improve patient safety?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his incredible advocacy to protect patient safety.

Recently I was pleased to announce a significant investment in the Canadian Patient Safety Institute to help reduce harm, save lives, and protect the health of Canadians. This investment will ensure, as the member says, that medication is safer, that surgeries are safer, and that home care is also safer.

We have seen this approach work. We have seen it work now in 700 hospitals across the country and we look forward to much more success. At the end of the day, our government is working very hard, with the support of the hon. member, to make sure that we protect patient safety.

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ETHICS

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question. Has the Government of Canada, or the Conservative Party, paid any legal fees for the member for Peterborough, who is facing very serious charges under the Elections Act? They include wilfully incurring election expenses in excess of the limit, wilfully exceeding the contribution limit by paying election expenses of \$21,000 out of his own funds, and knowingly providing the Chief Electoral Officer with false documents that failed to report a \$21,000 election expense.

Has the Government of Canada paid his legal fees?

• (1505)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no, the Government of Canada has not paid his legal fees.

*Points of Order***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are dismayed to learn that seriously injured soldiers are being kicked out of the military before they qualify for their pensions. In June, the former defence minister said that injured members are not released from the military until they are prepared to do so, yet today another injured soldier is facing discharge.

Will the new Minister of National Defence intervene and immediately put a stop to this disgraceful practice? The NDP supports our troops. Why will the Conservative government not?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member actually has it wrong. Before being released, members of the Canadian Armed Forces work with the military on a transition plan. Members are not released until they are prepared. That has not changed, certainly not under this defence minister and not under the previous defence minister.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every MP in the House has heard from businesses from their riding who are having trouble finding workers with the right skills to fill the jobs that are available. These mismatches are among the greatest challenges facing continued economic growth.

I wonder if the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development can update the House on our efforts to help unemployed people or underemployed people get these jobs?

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Peace River for his diligent efforts on behalf of workers in his riding.

The Conservative government believes that employers are best positioned to make decisions about skills training, not government bureaucrats. That is why our government is introducing the Canada job grant next year. This grant will help Canadians access skills training that leads to a guaranteed job at the end of that training.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business are among many organizations that said the status quo simply does not work and that they support putting decisions in the hands of job creators.

* * *

*[Translation]***ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the situation for Atikamekw students in Manawan is unacceptable.

The Conservatives have cut \$430,000 from education services. An entire section of Simon P. Ottawa elementary school has been deemed unsafe.

The minister proudly marked the opening of the Otapi school in Manawan two years ago, but that does nothing to fix the problems at the elementary school.

This situation is urgent. Will the minister promise to release emergency funds to fix the problem?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the member were even remotely serious about the problem she is referring to, she could have at least had the decency to inform me personally or to inform my office, which she did not do.

As for her question, I will take the matter under advisement. I have no idea what she is referring to. Since she did not have the decency to give me any warning, I will look into the situation and get back to her.

* * *

*[English]***ETHICS**

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, on December 22, 2008, the Prime Minister broke all records, appointing 18 senators in one single day. That included Senators Brazeau, Duffy, and Wallin.

Everybody knew the new senator from Prince Edward Island did not really live in Prince Edward Island, and everybody knew the new senator from Saskatchewan did not really live in Saskatchewan.

The Prime Minister appointed all members of his personal staff. The Prime Minister appointed Nigel Wright. I agree with the Prime Minister that there is one person responsible for this scandal. I ask the Prime Minister if he now feels he should accept some personal responsibility for this sordid mess.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me just say this. Serving in the House of Commons or the Senate is an extraordinary responsibility, but it is also an incredible honour. What do Canadians expect for that? They expect that we will do our best and that we will be honest in our dealings. That is all they ask.

In this case, we have senators who have clearly broken the rules. They accepted payments for expenses that they did not incur. Canadians are clear as well; they want accountability for that. That is what this motion in the Senate would do.

We ask the opposition to help us. We ask the Liberals in the Senate to get out of the way and let the senators pass this motion that would suspend these senators without pay.

* * *

● (1510)

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Leader of the Opposition used question period to engage in a discussion regarding a proboscis, or an elongated appendage of the body. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will agree with his House leader and his caucus that these types of statements do not lead to decorum in this place. Perhaps he will measure the size of his constitution by whether he decides to rise and apologize for this unparliamentary discourse.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while listening to the sensitivities, I was about to get up because the member for Mississauga—Streetsville twice uttered something much more serious than what my hon. friend across the way has suggested. However, if the hon. minister is sensitive to these particular statements, then I am sure she would like to take up the conversation with her friend from Mississauga—Streetsville.

The Speaker: I think it would be appropriate for all sides to take a step back from some of the language that is being used.

At the time it was used, I regret that I did not catch it, but I can confirm that “proboscis” is in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which gives not only the definition but also the word origin and etymology. It comes from the Greek, meaning “to feed”, but the second definition is, of course, the human nose, and it first entered into the English language in 1630.

I cannot claim to have the same level of vocabulary as, say, a William Buckley, so that one did get by me.

Previous Speakers have tried to draw some lines around certain phrases. We heard some of them today, and I cautioned the House earlier. My advice to all members on all sides is that when Speakers attempt to draw those lines, members should try to stay clear of them and not try to tiptoe up to them and see how far you can lean over. I think it would help the level of debate during question period and I know the Chair would appreciate it on a personal level.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF CANADA

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise when we are dealing with the proboscis of a pachyderm. That is really when we get into some issues, but we are not on those issues today.

[Translation]

I have the honour to table today, in both official languages, the Public Accounts of Canada

[English]

The Government of Canada is committed to strong financial management and reporting to ensure accountability and transparency. For the fifteenth consecutive year, the Auditor General of Canada has provided an unqualified opinion on the Government of Canada's financial statements, and the Government of Canada can be justifiably proud of this record. Certainly we are, on the Conservative side of the House.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the reports of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie respecting its partici-

Routine Proceedings

pation at the 29th regional assembly of the America Region of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, which was held this summer in Quebec City, from August 19 to 22, and also at the VII La Francophonie Games, which were held in Nice, France, from September 11 to 14, 2013.

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[English]

PETITIONS

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions that I would like to present to the House today. The first one asks the House of Commons to support an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act's mandatory labelling of genetically modified food.

• (1515)

CANADA SHIPPING ACT

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition asks the House of Commons to support an act to amend the Canada Shipping Act in relation to derelict vessels and wrecks. That is the subject of my private member's bill. On the west coast and other parts of Canada, derelict vessels are an enormous problem.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE MEDAL

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the final petition calls on the House to introduce a new volunteer service medal. To be known as the Governor General's volunteer medal, it would acknowledge and recognize volunteerism by Canadian troops.

SHARK FINNING

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today from petitioners who are saying that the continuing practice of shark finning, which is the practice of removing the fins and discarding the remainder of the shark back into the sea, is having a devastating effect on shark species around the world. They therefore call on the Government of Canada to immediately ban the importation of shark fins to Canada.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it my honour today to table four petitions from many constituents in my riding of Guelph with regard to the Canada-China investment treaty. My constituents are very concerned about the lack of public consultation and the secretive process by which the treaty was negotiated. They are also concerned that the treaty will provide state-owned enterprises with the ability to claim damages and complain to the federal government about laws or regulations, made at any level of government, that reduce their expectation of profits.

The petitioners ask the government to take immediate steps to limit the influence of state-owned enterprises over our democracy in the interest of ensuring that the power over Canadian laws remains in Canadian hands.

Routine Proceedings

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of constituents in my riding regarding issues concerning the mining industry in Canada and around the world.

HEALTH BENEFITS FOR REFUGEES

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table two petitions. The first is from dozens of people in my community protesting the cuts to the interim federal health program for refugees. Vulnerable refugees are now being denied basic health necessities, such as medication, psychiatric treatment, and hospitalization. Even in cases where they now qualify for some medical benefits, there is so much confusion that in many cases, they are not even applying for such benefits. Amnesty International, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nurses Association, and the Canadian Association of Community Health Centres, among others, strongly oppose this unjust treatment of refugees.

PENSIONS

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is from many constituents in the Toronto area who are protesting the change to old age security that will negatively impact those with lower incomes, who will have to work two years longer or lose the benefits for two years. It will also impact young people, who will not have access to these jobs.

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition calling on Parliament to offer an unequivocal, sincere, and public apology to those home children who died while being ashamed of their history and deprived of their families, to the living and elderly home children who continue to bear the weight of the past, and to the descendants of the home children who continue to feel the void passed down through generations while continuing to search out relatives lost as a result of a system that victimized them under the guise of protection.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. The first deals with my Bill C-257, on mandatory labelling for genetically modified foods. The petitioners are saying that genetically engineered food labelling is already compulsory in many countries and is known to be both practical and useful. They call upon Parliament to enact Bill C-257 to require mandatory labelling of all food in which the presence of genetically modified ingredients can be detected.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second series of petitions deals with my Bill C-322. Folks are saying that because horses are commonly administered drugs that are strictly prohibited from being used, at any time, in all other food processing of animals destined for human supply, and because horsemeat products generally being sold for human consumption in domestic and international markets are likely to contain these prohibited substances, they call upon the government to enact Bill C-322, which would prohibit the importation or exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption as well as of horsemeat products for human consumption.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the debate concerning CCSVI should be based on science, evidence, and improving the quality of life for Canadians with MS, who wonder how the government is going to judge the radically different CCSVI data from the east and west of Canada. Canadians with MS ask that if the debate was about evidence, why did the Minister of Health not meet with CCSVI groups across the country and with Canadians who had been treated to learn of their experience? Why did she not include experts in CCSVI in her scientific expert working group, and why was the decision to kill Bill S-204 taken eight months before the Senate hearings?

The petitioners are calling on the minister to consult experts, undertake phase three clinical trials on an urgent basis, and require follow-up care.

● (1520)

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot about youth not being interested in public affairs, current events, and civic responsibility, but I received petitions that I am presenting today from some young people in a high school in Winnipeg, the Seven Oaks School Division Met School, Garden City Collegiate Met School Justice League. They have collected names on petitions in the Winnipeg area.

The petitioners are calling on this House to act to ensure corporate responsibility from Canadian mining companies abroad and particularly for the regulation of conflict minerals so that as they travel and cross borders, countries are able to discriminate those that have aided in sustainable development versus those that have not.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DEMENTIA

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of people from the London area who want to draw the attention of the Minister of Health and this House to the fact that the federal government needs a national strategy for dementia and the health care of persons afflicted with Alzheimer's.

The petitioners ask that the Minister of Health and the House of Commons pass Bill C-356, which was introduced by the MP for Nickel Belt, and they ask the minister to initiate discussions within 30 days of the act coming into force.

The petitioners want specific national objectives to be set, and they want to encourage greater investment in research for the discovery or development of treatments that would prevent and reverse the effects of dementia and Alzheimer's.

KATIMAVIK

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition regarding Katimavik on behalf of residents of Thunder Bay, Calgary, Bracebridge, and Ottawa. The petitioners are demanding that the Government of Canada immediately restore funding and relaunch the youth volunteer program, Katimavik.

The petitioners want our government to recognize the importance of Katimavik to Canadian youth who participated in it, the non-profit organizations it served, and the communities it operated in and helped across Canada.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENTS BY PRIME MINISTER REGARDING REPAYMENT OF SENATOR'S EXPENSES—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on October 17, 2013 by the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay regarding alleged misleading statements made by the Prime Minister during oral questions on June 5, 2013.

[Translation]

I would like to thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for raising this matter, as well as the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the House leader of the official opposition, the member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, the member for Winnipeg North, the member for Richmond—Arthabaska and the member for Avalon for their comments.

[English]

In raising this question of privilege, the member for Timmins—James Bay claimed that answers given by the Prime Minister during question period on June 5 with respect to a financial transaction between his former chief of staff, Nigel Wright, and Senator Mike Duffy completely contradicted information later revealed in July through a Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigation.

Speaker's Ruling

The hon. member focused on the Prime Minister's June 5 assertion to this House that decisions regarding the transaction

...were not communicated to me or to members of my office.

He concluded that the discrepancy meant either that staff in the Prime Minister's Office withheld information from him and knowingly allowed him to respond to questions in the House with false information, even perhaps without his knowledge, or that the Prime Minister chose to ignore the truth.

This, he said, was evidence enough for a finding by the Speaker that a *prima facie* breach of privilege had occurred. He likened the present situation to one faced by Speaker Jerome on December 6, 1978 after it had been ascertained that a former RCMP commissioner had deliberately misled a minister, who then provided the incorrect information to a member, thus impeding him in the performance of his duties.

[Translation]

The member for Timmins—James Bay then referred to my ruling of May 7, 2012, in which I reiterated the three conditions that need to be established when alleging that a member is in contempt for deliberately misleading the House. In doing so, he acknowledged that only one of the three conditions had been met, namely that the statement in question was known to be misleading. He then stated that further study was required in order to determine whether the other two conditions had been met, namely whether the Prime Minister knew at the time that what he told the House was incorrect, and that in making the remarks the Prime Minister intended to mislead the House.

● (1525)

[English]

The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons countered that the Prime Minister had, in fact, indicated both inside and outside the House that he had answered questions based on the information he had at the time. The government House leader then recalled the long-standing practice in this House of accepting the word of a member.

[Translation]

Furthermore, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons argued that the ruling of Speaker Jerome, as cited by the member for Timmins—James Bay was not instructive in the present case as that finding of *prima facie* privilege was firmly based on an admission by an official that he had deliberately misled a minister. He concluded that, since no answers provided in the House were known at the time to be incorrect, there was no intention on the part of the Prime Minister to mislead the House.

[English]

The importance of this issue for members individually and collectively cannot be overstated, as it speaks to the very privileges upon which our parliamentary system is founded. Members frequently have risen in this House to defend their need, and indeed their right, to be provided with accurate and truthful information in order to fulfill their parliamentary obligations, and Speakers have frequently underscored the need for clarity and accuracy as well.

Speaker's Ruling

That said, many of my predecessors in the chair have reminded the House that in most instances, claims related to disputed facts are not grounds for prima facie findings of privilege.

As Speaker Fraser indicated on December 4, 1986, at page 1792 of *Debates*:

Differences of opinion with respect to fact and details are not infrequent in the House and do not necessarily constitute a breach of privilege.

As stated in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition at page 510:

In most instances, when a point of order or a question of privilege has been raised in regard to a response to an oral question, the Speaker has ruled that the matter is a disagreement among Members over the facts surrounding the issue. As such, these matters are more a question of debate and do not constitute a breach of the rules or of privilege.

[Translation]

More recently, Speaker Milliken expanded on this and the role of the Chair in such instances when on January 31, 2008, at page 2435 of *House of Commons Debates*, he stated:

...any dispute regarding the accuracy or appropriateness of a minister's response to an oral question is a matter of debate; it is not a matter for the Speaker to judge. The same holds true with respect to the breadth of a minister's answer to a question in the House: this is not for the Speaker to determine.

[English]

While the Speaker might not be tasked with assessing the content of replies with respect to their accuracy or appropriateness, the Chair does, however, have an important if strictly limited role when it is alleged that the House has been misled. In this particular instance, the matter centres on allegations of the House being deliberately misled, so certain precedents and practices are germane to the case. As the member for Timmins—James Bay and the government House leader have both indicated, my ruling of May 7, 2012, is of particular relevance. At that time, at page 7650 of the *Debates*, I stated:

It has become accepted practice in this House that the following elements have to be established when it is alleged that a member is in contempt for deliberately misleading the House: one, it must be proven that the statement was misleading; two, it must be established that the member making the statement knew at the time that the statement was incorrect; and three, that in making the statement, the member intended to mislead the House.

[Translation]

Maingot's second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, at page 234, lends further support to this assertion, indicating that:

...before the House will be permitted by the Speaker to embark on a debate in such circumstances [it must be demonstrated] that a Member of the House of Commons was intentionally misled or an admission of facts that leads naturally to the conclusion that a Member was intentionally misled, and a direct relationship between the misleading information and a proceeding in Parliament, is necessary.

• (1530)

[English]

Coupled with this is the time-honoured tradition of accepting a member's word in the House. Many of my predecessors have reiterated that principle over the years, just as Speaker Sauvé did on May 27, 1982, when she explained, at page 17823 of *Debates*, that:

I cannot attach greater credibility to the word of one hon. member over another. The Speaker cannot interpret statements made by hon. members which must be accepted at face value. The hon. member [...] claims he had been misled. I accept that. He claims he has been deliberately misled. I accept that too, but as an assertion, not as a fact upon which I could find privilege; because the minister, who has the

same right to have his word accepted in this House, says there is no attempt to mislead, deliberately or otherwise, and I accept that, too.

To uphold these conditions and practices, as the Chair must do, the threshold of proof is high. It should be no surprise then that in the rare instances when prima facie has been found, little or no doubt was left as to the validity of the claim made. The ruling of December 6, 1978, in which Speaker Jerome found that a prima facie contempt of the House existed, rested on the official's own admission that the minister had been deliberately misled, and it was on that basis that Speaker Jerome stated in the *Journals* of December 6, 1978, at page 1857:

[Translation]

I can interpret that testimony in no other way than meaning that a deliberate attempt was made to obstruct the member in the performance of his duties and, consequently, to obstruct the House itself.

This precedent stands in contrast to most others. Among them, and perhaps more analogous to the issue now before the House, is Speaker Milliken's ruling of February 25, 2004, where he concluded at page 1047 of *House of Commons Debates* that there was no prima facie breach of privilege since:

...no evidence has been brought forth to show that...department officials deliberately intended to deceive their superiors and so obstruct hon. members in the performance of their duties.

[English]

The Chair has carefully reviewed the evidence brought forward, as well as what was said in the House, searching for evidence that the conditions laid out in my ruling of May 2012, and in Speaker Milliken's ruling of February 2011 that informed it, have been met. The Chair has not found that evidence. The member for Timmins—James Bay himself doubted that all enumerated conditions for finding a prima facie privilege have materialized when he conceded:

The other two elements, however, do need to be clarified, and this is the reason I am asking you, Mr. Speaker, to find that there is a prima facie case so that the issue could be studied at greater depth by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[Translation]

He cast further doubt when he asked, “Did the Prime Minister know at the time that the statements he gave to the House were misleading?” and “Did the Prime Minister intend to mislead the House?”

By his own admission, neither question can be answered with certainty.

[English]

These same doubts were echoed by the House leader of the official opposition and the member for Winnipeg North. That the Prime Minister has acknowledged that he did not himself have full information when he provided an answer during question period last June 5 does not lead the Chair to conclude that the two missing conditions have been met. Nor is it appropriate for the Chair to speculate on whether the Prime Minister ought to have known of Mr. Wright's actions or been told of them by the individuals in his office who are now said to have known about them.

The Chair understands that members have strong views on both sides of this very public and evolving issue, but I must remind the House that the Chair is bound by very narrow parameters in situations such as this one.

Based on accepted practices, precedents and usages, as well as a thorough scouring of the evidence presented and statements made in the House, the Chair cannot, in the current circumstances, find evidence that the Prime Minister's statements to the House were deliberately misleading, that he deliberately provided incorrect information, that he believed his statements to be misleading or that he intended them to be misleading.

Accordingly, the Chair can find no valid procedural grounds for finding a prima facie case of privilege at this time.

I thank honourable members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1535)

[English]

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY ACT

Hon. Lynne Yelich (for the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages) moved that Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Museums Act in order to establish the Canadian Museum of History and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to speak to the bill earlier this week. It is a pleasure to stand here again and have the opportunity to speak to bill C-7, which was formerly Bill C-49. It represented the creation and the transfer of the Canadian Museum of Civilization to the Canadian museum of history. It is with the greatest pleasure that I rise today.

First, I find Canada's rich history to be absolutely fascinating. For example, Quebec, which was founded in 1608, is Canada's oldest city. Almost half the buildings in the historic district of old Quebec were built before 1850. Today, this 135-hectare area is a UNESCO world heritage site. The history of John A. Macdonald, George-Étienne Cartier, and the other Fathers of Confederation negotiations at the Charlottetown, Quebec, and London conferences led to the beginning of the Canada we know today. The living history we experience now such as Commander Chris Hadfield's amazing journey comes to mind. Last spring he mesmerized people around the world, me included. There is no doubt his name and his mission will be forever part of our collective Canadian history.

As members can imagine, I am delighted with our government's commitment to provide Canadians with an opportunity to learn more about our history.

We have already outlined initiatives we are taking to ensure Canadians have greater access to our history. I would like to mention just a couple of them.

The second Canada History Week will take place next July and communities throughout the country will celebrate history with local

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events. As well, we established the Canada history fund to recognize outstanding students and teachers of history.

When I spoke before the House on October 21, I also mentioned these initiatives, as well as others. For example, beginning in 2014, we plan to increase funding for the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* and the *Canadian Encyclopedia*. These are great tools that all Canadians can access online. We have also provided support for the Historica-Dominion Institute to create two new *Heritage Minutes* each year between now and 2017.

I am proud of the efforts of our government and I am proud of how we have worked to promote our Canadian history.

The proposed Canadian museum of history will play a key role in allowing Canadians to learn more and share our country's unique past. In fact, it will be housed on the banks of the Ottawa River in what we all now know as the Canadian Museum of Civilization. This beautiful building was designed by renowned architect Douglas Cardinal, whose incredible work could be a chapter in a story of our cultural heritage.

Mr. Cardinal offered an excellent observation about the Canadian Museum of Civilization's progression into the new Canadian museum of history. He said:

I love the fact that the museum keeps evolving and growing, and people still feel that it's a national monument that can expand and serve all of Canada.

On October 21, I provided a summary of the bill's progression through the House. As I have mentioned, we spent over 20 hours debating the legislation. We discussed it from many different angles: the need for a museum devoted to Canadian history; how it would be financed; as well, as the logistical details and how it would progress to its opening in 2016.

The legislation has received significant study and I am pleased to say that we have progressed to third reading stage.

In fact, when we asked for participation from Canadians across the country and what they thought should happen with the museum, we received over 20,000 pieces of advice from Canadians. This is clear evidence that Canadians are engaged in this process and are quite willing, when given the opportunity, to participate in a dialogue as to the direction the museum should take.

At the same time, I know some of my colleagues have expressed concerns about the new museum. I want to assure the House that we have heard their comments and I would like to briefly address some of them.

The issue of the new museum's independence has been raised on more than one occasion. Rest assured, the Canadian museum of history, like all national museums, indeed, all crown corporations, will operate at arm's-length from the government.

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I am so impressed by the people who manage our museums across the country, our small museums in small town communities or our large museums like Pier 21 and the Canadian Museum of Civilization. It is their commitment and effort that promote Canadian history in our country. These are the people who should be, will be and are responsible for the content in our museums.

● (1540)

Our government is establishing a new mandate for the Canadian museum of history, one focused on the history of our country. Once that is done, it will be the museum's capable board of trustees, its director, its management and all of the employees who will determine how to present our country's history.

I also heard members speak to the important issue of research. Nothing in this bill limits the ability of the new museum to carry out research. It will have exactly the same powers as the current Canadian Museum of Civilization, and research is an essential component of that museum. It will remain and continue to be an essential part of the new museum.

I understand the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Canadian War Museum have recently developed a joint research strategy. It confirms the essential role research will play in both museums over the next decade. It is available on the Canadian Museum of Civilization's website for anyone who would like to learn more about it.

Let me also reassure the House that the new legislation will not have an impact on international travelling exhibitions. Potentially, we will see them increase to talk across the world about Canada's history. Our government recognizes the importance of these exhibitions from an educational perspective. We also know from a business perspective how much potential revenue they can create, not just for the museum but also for the surrounding region and area. Nothing in the legislation in any way jeopardizes the museum's ability to present these exhibitions, which have been so popular with the Canadian public.

I am particularly pleased that the future Canadian museum of history is negotiating partnership agreements with the institutions across the country that devote themselves to our Canadian history. This is an amazing way to reach out to people across the country. Three of these are already in place, one with the Royal BC Museum, one with Calgary's Glenbow Museum and an agreement was signed just last summer with the Manitoba Museum. I understand that plans are already being made for the current partners to send and receive collections from each other.

Other partnerships will soon follow. The Canadian museum of history will be a must see for the thousands of people who come to this region each and every year. However, its reach will be far greater than that. Partnerships like the ones I have described will allow the Canadian museum of history to work with museums across the country, each and every one. In so doing, we will make our national collections accessible to as many Canadians as possible. Geography will not interfere with our ability to ensure that Canadians see and learn what our history is all about.

The new museum will lead a network that will connect history museums across the country so they can access some of the 3.5

million items that are in the national collection. Like all museums, the Canadian Museum of Civilization has a vast majority of its collection in storage. This will be a wonderful way to provide greater access to our treasured artifacts. Because of space and issues that prevent all of our artifacts from being displayed, it will see those artifacts travel across the country and be displayed not in storage, but in a position where they can be viewed, studied and admired.

Before, everyone had to travel to the national capital region to appreciate first-hand an important part of their heritage. Now they will be able to go to museums much closer, in fact in their own communities. It is an incredible resource and partnership that is being created through this process.

At the same time, there are museums across Canada, in the very communities where we live, including my riding with the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre. There are more than 2,500 of them. They cover different aspects of our history and many have fascinating collections to begin with. We want to ensure that these smaller museums will be able to share their exhibits with the Canadian museum of history and to access the new museum's collection.

With that goal in mind, we have put new support in place to make it easier for them to approach the new Canadian museum of history and access the national collection.

In addition to this, several changes have been made to the Canadian Heritage museums assistance program to assist small Canadian museums.

● (1545)

The exhibition circulation fund would not only support the borrowing of collections from the Canadian museum of history, but would also extend the support to small institutions that were previously ineligible. A requirement that exhibitions must travel outside of the province or territory has been removed in the case of history exhibitions to encourage small institutions to exchange exhibitions with each other. It is a requirement that has long been an issue for smaller museums that would like to deal directly with each other. This new piece of legislation, under the guidance of the Canadian museum of history, would allow that to happen. We have also made sure that the aboriginal heritage component would give priority to exhibits focused on historical events and key figures, and would encourage exhibitions in non-traditional spaces, such as community centres.

To sum up, this new national museum would work with museums across Canada to ensure that as many Canadians as possible have the opportunity to learn about our achievements. In addition, the Department of Canadian Heritage is using many of its internal resources to support access to Canadian history. The Canadian Conservation Institute is putting a priority on the conservation of objects related to the road to 2017. Finally, the Canadian Heritage Information Network's Virtual Museum of Canada would dedicate 25% of its annual budget, up to \$500,000, to virtual exhibits related to the road to 2017.

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That brings me to the 150th anniversary of Canada's Confederation. As everyone in the House knows, in just a few years, we will celebrate this momentous event. What a perfect time to welcome a new Canadian museum of history. Since Confederation, we have grown as a country and accomplished so many great things. In the lead up to 2017, we will promote the people, places and events that have marked our history.

As the House knows, this year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first Canadian expedition in the Arctic. Next year, it will be the 150th anniversary of the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences, which led to the founding of Canada. There are also the 200th anniversaries of the births of Sir George-Étienne Cartier and Sir John A. Macdonald. We will also remember the sacrifices of two generations of Canadians during the First and Second World Wars. I look forward to paying tribute to all of our veterans.

In commemorating people and events such as these, we become aware that we stand tall today because of the millions of men and women whose courage, hard work and perseverance helped to establish this great country. They are renowned artists such as filmmaker Denis Villeneuve, painter Emily Carr, singer Céline Dion, pianist Glenn Gould, writer Gabrielle Roy, Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro and many more.

Sports heroes such as Clara Hughes, the only athlete ever to win multiple medals at both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games, and hockey legends Maurice "The Rocket" Richard, Mario Lemieux and Wayne Gretzky are also a part of this celebration. As is our multi-sport champion, Lionel Conacher, who was inducted in the Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 1955, the Canadian Football Hall of Fame in 1964 and the Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1965. No wonder Canada has a reputation as a leading sports nation.

Distinguished scientists have also made us proud. For example, Frederick Banting, whose discovery of insulin has helped to save countless lives.

Impressive, is it not? It is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the incredible people who have made this country what it is.

The upcoming anniversary is tailor-made to learn more about our history, pay tribute to the people who have left their mark on this country and reflect on our legacy. The Canadian museum of history would do just that. It would be based in the national capital region. It would reach out to people across the nation through a network of museums in their own communities. It would entertain us. It would educate us. For many, it would inspire us to learn more about the people, places and events that brought us to where we are today, a free and democratic country envied by many around the world.

There are four specific changes. I would like to reiterate those that are being made within Bill C-7. The first is a change of the name of the Canadian Museum of Civilization to the Canadian museum of history. The second is for the purpose of mandate change in terms of the direction that the new museum would be taking. The third is that the capacity and powers of the museum would remain the same, intact as they are today. The fourth is that there would be no change to the governance structure of the existing structure; no interruption of the corporation's ability to operate; no impact on employees, officers or trustees; and no change in legal responsibilities.

● (1550)

We have before us the opportunity to prepare for 2017. The creation and the renewed mandate of the Museum of Civilization to the museum of history puts us in that position. It allows for us not only to celebrate what is historical, obvious and important from a Canadian perspective here in Ottawa, it actually sets the foundation for us to have this historical celebration, a study of our history, a learning opportunity of our history across our country.

There are thousands of museums, smaller museums in smaller communities that were never in a position to access or use the over 3.5 million artifacts, many of them at or currently in storage at the Museum of Civilization. They will be able to travel across this country. When those artifacts and exhibits travel across the country, there is an opportunity to ensure it will be done safely and that each one of those artifacts will be insured by the Government of Canada through the museum.

We have before us the living and breathing opportunity to see where we are going as a country in terms of the celebration of our 150th anniversary. We also see that our historical life, the life of Canada, when put on a road map, is one of envy for the rest of the world.

One of the things I learned during my time at the Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism was that when studies are done across this country, across this world, on where individuals or families would move if they were to leave their country of origin, of the seven billion people who walk on this earth, one billion said that Canada would be their first choice. With that profound understanding, we should consider ourselves fortunate. With 35 million people living in this country, there are a billion who believe this would be the country to live in if they were to move from their country of origin.

It says to all of us here in the House that this is our opportunity to show the world. The Canadian museum of history is setting the foundation to say to the rest of the world that we are prepared to talk about not only how great our country is now but how our country was built, how our country started and where our country is in terms of its position in the world.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this afternoon. I certainly hope that all members of the House, regardless of their party, regardless of where they sit in the House of Commons, will see there is an opportunity for us to put a renewed focus on our country's history, and that history begins at the Canadian museum of history right here in Ottawa.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I sense my colleague's great interest in history.

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Having sat on a museum board for a number of years in the Northwest Territories and having faced the inevitable decline of federal funding toward other museums across this country that try very hard to hold up the history of this country, I see the government investing a whole bunch of money into an Ontario-centric museum here in Ottawa and leaving behind all the museums in all the small communities across this whole country which, over the past two decades with the Liberal and the Conservatives, have seen one cut after another on any kind of federal support for these marvellous museums.

The museum in my hometown, the Northern Life Museum, has over 10,000 artifacts that go back through centuries in northern Canada, collected by the Oblate missionaries. We do not get any funding anymore from the federal government. That collection is priceless.

What will the government do for small museums across this country? Will it continue to build monuments here, or tear apart old monuments to create new ones in the capital region?

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's intervention. I hope he was listening closely to what I was speaking to this afternoon. I hope that perhaps he would have had a chance to go through all the pages of the transcript of when the former Minister of Canadian Heritage and now the Minister of Industry appeared at committee to explain and to extrapolate on the very point he is making.

Part of the legislation will allow the small museums in the Northwest Territories that the hon. member speaks to, and small museums across this country, to not only participate in a more meaningful way in Canada's history but to actually have access to the artifacts that sit here in Ottawa and Gatineau. The artifacts will be spread across the country.

The small museums can now partner with other small museums. It is good for Canada and good for small communities.

• (1555)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his new responsibility and I look forward to working with him on the heritage committee.

He said during his speech that the birth of Canada was in 1867. I am sure he will correct that. He knows it is not true. The birth of Canada was centuries before. Since he knows that, can he commit to keep the artifacts of New France in Quebec City instead of bringing them to Ottawa?

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank the member for his kind words and also congratulate him on being elected as second vice-chair of the heritage committee. I look forward to working with him.

I would like to respond to his point. In fact, our confederation was in 1867. Prior to that there was Upper and Lower Canada, I acknowledge that, but our Confederation as a country was 1867.

Part of what we are trying to do with this piece of legislation is not to become centric in terms of our focus of there only being one location for all of these artifacts and all of our Canadian history

should be located in one place, but that there can be an exchange, an interaction and delivery of those historical pieces to other communities so they are not just enjoyed in one community but across this country.

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for St. Catharines and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, for carrying forward on the legislation, Bill C-7.

I heard what was said by the New Democrats on this matter and it needs to be pointed out as being factually not true. The member said that our government has not done anything for small museums. That is absolutely not true. The Canadian Museums Association represents all of Canada's hundreds of small museums all across this country. They all unanimously support the creation of this museum because this one museum in the national capital would create a hub-and-spoke model from which all small museums all across the country will benefit.

Our government, in spite of the worst recession since the Second World War, created the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Canadian Museum of Immigration, the Canadian museum of history. We have increased funding for small museums all across the country. All of them will benefit by the creation of this museum, which is why provincial governments, whether they are New Democrat, Liberal or Conservative, are all supporting the legislation. All the museums associations, all the historic associations, all of them are supporting this because it is a no-brainer to support a great national institution as we go to our 150th birthday and celebrate the brilliance that is Canada.

The opposition should stop being so blindly partisan in opposing everything just because it came from a Conservative. This is going to be a great institution from which all Canadians will benefit for years to come.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank the Minister of Industry for his intervention. We can see the passion upon which, as Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, he built the strategy that is going to see the Canadian museum of history established and opened, hopefully within a very short period of time, 2016. We can also see the fundamental understanding that he and the government has for our history and the industry, which is museums that display who we are, what we are and what we will become. I want to thank him for all of his efforts as Minister of Heritage because it was something he did with a lot of passion and that is quite evident in the points he made this afternoon.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon the Conservatives are saying that they care about history and about our heritage.

However, the Conservatives cut the budget of Library and Archives Canada. Historians across the country agree that these cuts really hurt. The Conservatives also laid off 80% of Parks Canada archaeologists. There are now only about 10 archeologists left to take care of 167 national historic sites.

Why did the government make those cuts? Why did it introduce such a bill and make cuts that are so detrimental to science, history and heritage?

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●(1600)

[English]

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, I guess the member is trying to point out that there somehow were cuts. The Minister of Industry and former Minister of Heritage just pointed out very clearly and succinctly that there have been investments made in small museums and there have been investments made in large national museums. Not only are we concerned from a heritage perspective, not only are we concerned from a historical perspective, but we are also concerned about the small communities that depend on these museums and their understanding and delivery of their services to know about our Canadian history.

With third reading of the bill, we have an opportunity to promote and show across this country in a Canadian non-partisan way that it is time to deliver on the Canadian museum of history. It is time to move the bill forward, and I will look for the member's positive support this afternoon rather than the negative tone that the opposition seems to be taking when we have a bill that is about the future of our museums, which speaks to the history of our country.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on a comment. The former minister made reference to the Canadian Human Rights Museum. It is going to be located in downtown Winnipeg. It is a very impressive facility and no doubt it will be an absolute world class museum. I wonder if he might want to pay tribute to individuals, such as the visionaries behind it. Izzy Asper and Gail Asper were a driving force in making the museum a reality. Many different private individuals from across Canada have actually contributed. We have even had contributions from other countries. I am thinking specifically of the Mahatma Gandhi statue that was contributed from India.

In looking at our treasures, we also need to recognize that it is not just government; the private sector and others play a very strong role in the operations of our museums, wherever they may be.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, whether it is Kathleen Powell, the director of our museum in St. Catharines, or those who work in all of our museums across the country, whether small community museums or national museums, I certainly am proud and would be happy to step forward and congratulate everyone who is currently working in a museum or has worked in one in the past, as well as all those who are part of what we are from a Canadian historical perspective.

I would submit that if I make those acknowledgments and thank all of those individuals, I certainly do not want to point to the federal government as being the only entity that is involved in the process. That is absolutely not the case. I have hundreds of support quotes from across the country, from private and public sector individuals, to support the cause we are working on here. I would then ask the member to support this legislation.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Following question period, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley referred to me and some comments that he believed he heard during question period. I am not sure what he was referring to specifically, but obviously, if he and other members of the House felt that I had used a word or language that they felt was inappropriate or unparliamentary, I would certainly withdraw those comments and apologize to the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville for his clarification on the earlier point that he referenced. I am sure the House appreciates his remarks also.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Museums Act in order to establish the Canadian Museum of History and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to share my time with the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to split her time with another member, as noted?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed and so ordered. The hon. member for London—Fanshawe

●(1605)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, New Democrats oppose Bill C-7, which proposes to change the name and mandate of Canada's most visited and most popular museum, the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Let me explain why I have taken this position and why this House should vote down this bill. First, the process the government is using to change the museum is flawed and it lacks transparency.

Second, the changes to the mandate of the museum are unacceptable. The government wants to shut down the Canada Hall social history exhibit. It wants to ignore the contributions of hard-working, salt-of-the-earth Canadians, contributions they made to Canadian history.

My third and strongest objection is to the government and its apparent desire to dictate how the history of Canada is to be told. Governments should not be involved in determining what its people know and do not know about themselves. Museums must be left to the museum professionals.

The Conservatives should stick to politics and leave history to the experts. They have no business rewriting what Canadian history is and how it is told.

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As to my first point, members might ask how changes to the Museum of Civilization lack transparency. We are told that the re-branding, renaming and remaking of the Museum of Civilization is going to cost \$25 million, but where is this money coming from? Which programs in the Department of Canadian Heritage are being trimmed and cut in order to pay for these unneeded changes?

The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages has refused to answer these questions. Besides the lack of transparency around the money, the Canadian Postal Museum, which was housed within the Museum of Civilization was unceremoniously closed, without notice or consultation. What possible reason could the government have to still the voice of the pioneers of our postal service?

Even though the Museum of Civilization performed national consultations about the changes at the behest of the government, these consultations appear to have been an empty public relations exercise giving the false appearance of transparency.

According to experts, these public consultations were not true consultations. Notes were not taken. Concerns were not addressed. The real decision-making is not happening out in the open. The decisions are actually being made behind closed doors. How is that transparent? How is that democratic?

As for my second objection, to the reorientation and renaming of the museum, my colleagues across the aisle might be wondering what the harm is in changing the name of the Museum of Civilization to the museum of history. In fact the name change is just a hint of the larger changes in the museum's mandate. Besides, most of the museum is already dealing with historical content and, until now, did not require a change of name.

The Conservatives want to eliminate all things at the museum that are anthropological or part of social history. They want the museum to be all about the heroic and a "who's who" approach to history. They want to emphasize dates and events. Anthropology has been part of this museum's mandate since 1907, but now the government seems to want Canadian history to be a simple and tidy story.

Let me remind the House that history is messy. History is complicated. History is best told from a holistic approach. History is more than just famous people and famous events. The museum currently uses a broad approach, and this is what we want to see remain.

Let me ask my colleagues across the aisle why they want to cut out the history of ordinary folk. What is wrong with the history of how things really were for everyday Canadians in the past? What is it in the current museum that they want removed? What do they want Canadians to forget about, besides the Senate scandals?

This country was built both by its famous people and its ordinary people. However, the government wants to sideline different stories, including stories of first nations and those marginalized due to class, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

The Conservatives want a museum that ignores the contributions of diverse and ordinary Canadians. That is why the government wants to eliminate Canada Hall. That is why it wants to get rid of

what has been called the largest and finest social history display in the country.

● (1610)

Canada Hall took 20 years to build and is made up of a series of life-size replicas of historical Canadian cities. This exhibit is a benchmark for the telling of social history in this country. It displays the lives of a wide breadth of ordinary Canadians from coast to coast to coast. These displays encapsulate an entire uninhabited history of this land.

I, for one, defer to and support museum professionals such as historians, anthropologists, archivists and archaeologists, and they are telling us not to reorient the museum to concentrate only on famous people. Famous people are not the only important people in Canadian history. Allow the museum to continue to tell the history of regular Canadians, of the people who built this country by their devotion to the land and by their determination to carve a future.

Canadian social history should not be sidelined. Canadians and visitors to Canada ought to be able to learn about all the different people who made this country, even those who are not famous.

Social exhibits like Canada Hall are about all of us. I am calling on the government to leave the mandate of the Museum of Civilization alone. If people could vote with their feet, then the 1.2 million people who visit and enjoy the Museum of Civilization annually would seem to agree with me.

The Museum of Civilization has been hailed as the crown jewel in our national network of museums. People love its approach to Canadian history. It is not a broken museum. Bill C-7 is a solution in search of a problem.

In my riding of London—Fanshawe, in the area around the city of London, we have excellent museums that are about our community's history. I am proud of the Strathroy-Caradoc museum and how it helps people discover our story.

The Fanshawe Pioneer Village, located in my riding, does a fantastic job of enabling people to learn about and understand local history, showing rural and urban life and the lives of everyday farmers and tradespeople in the 19th century.

Nearby, the Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum, which just celebrated its 40th anniversary, is a display that is devoted to the social and cultural history of first nations people. It is a testament to the contribution and reality of the people who lived in the Thames River valley.

My constituents love learning about and discovering their own history. The broad approach used by the three aforementioned museums is to be commended and shows Canadians want to know about their communities.

In his book, *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition*, Timothy Luke talks about how museums, like the Museum of Civilization and the ones I mentioned from the London area, are places where Canadians first learn and later reassure themselves about their culture and their history.

He describes how, in other countries, museums have become a battleground in culture wars. He describes how politicians have tried to influence national identities by meddling with these public institutions of memory and history. He warns that “Museum exhibits may not change public policies, but they can change other larger values and practices...”, that is to say, what people know about their history and what they know their community. I quote: “...that will transform policy”.

This is the reason I object to Bill C-7, and this brings me to my third and final argument. The changes being made at the Museum of Civilization have not been asked for by museum professionals, our country's historians, anthropologists and archaeologists. These academics have said they too are against these changes. We are listening to these experts, and the museum experts do not want Bill C-7.

Why are we going through with this charade? It is absolutely essential that we take a very close look at the motives behind these changes and that we consider what this museum means to Canadians and what its impact is on our understanding of ourselves. If we do not do that, we have failed.

If we allow the government to ram through this bill without any comment, without any discussion, then we have failed the people of Canada. We have failed those who have made our history and those who choose to preserve it.

• (1615)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised there are not any questions from the government side. The Conservatives must be in a state of silence, which is unusual. Of course, the Prime Minister is in a state of silence all day in all things these days.

The hon. member made an interesting point, which is that we have to take a look at the motive for this change, because what we are seeing from the current government is that its members are trying to reinvent history as it is presented over time, and that is a worrisome matter.

When experts on museums are coming out in opposition to these changes, we should be listening. It is extremely important to listen to evidence-based research from the people who work in the museums and to history as they understand it.

The hon. member said we have to take a look at the motives. I did not hear all of her speech, but could she outline in fairly short and concise terms what she might think the motives of the Conservatives would be for changing the name?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to try to peer into the Conservative mind, but I am profoundly concerned about this reinvention of history, the creation of history in their image. I wonder if it is as honest and honourable as they might try to present.

As a point of fact, the Conservatives are cutting local archives and abandoning national historic sites all across this country. They have cut 80% of the staff at Parks Canada. There are only a dozen archaeologists left to care for 167 of Canada's national historic sites, and the Conservatives want to invest tens of millions of dollars to remove exhibitions from a very popular museum. What is it about

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the Hall of Canada or about postal history that so upsets them that it must be removed?

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, to the member's last statement about the postal history exhibit that is set up, it will be moved, but it is not going to be abandoned or withdrawn. She should withdraw her remarks on that; she does not know her facts and is incorrect.

Second, experts in this industry understand what we are trying to accomplish here today. Let me read a couple of quotes from experts in the industry who understand what we are trying to accomplish together.

“...this government is sending a strong message that museums play an important role in our society”, said John McAvity, executive director of the Canadian Museums Association.

Marie Lalonde, executive director of the Ontario Museum Association, said, “...we welcome the opportunity to explore new ways that museums may work with each other” and that the association looks forward to the new direction announced by the government.

I have lots more. Experts across this country agree with the legislation. They agree with the ministry and they agree with what this government is doing. Why will the members on the other side of the House not put their partisanship aside on one issue and stand and support what we are trying to do for Canadian history here in this country?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, I have heard from experts too, and they are very upset with what the government is doing. They simply do not understand how it is going to benefit any of our museums across this country. The Conservatives are taking \$25 million out of museums. Who is going to pay for that? Is it the small museums across the country that are going to suffer? This change would come with an incredible cost, and I want to find out exactly what we are going to have to pay.

The Conservatives claim to be interested in history. They have already gutted Canada's knowledge and research communities by firing and muzzling archaeologists, archivists, and librarians and by gutting national historic sites.

What more proof do we need that their motives are less than honourable?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North, Regional Development; the hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Science and Technology.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-7 today.

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The Canadian Museum of Civilization, which Bill C-7 would turn into the Canadian museum of history, is located in my riding of Hull—Aylmer. Not only does this bill change the museum's name, but more importantly, it changes its mandate to refocus and reposition it.

Many of my constituents are questioning the Conservatives' real motives here. I have received many letters, emails and comments from Canadians asking me to oppose this bill. Many of them fear that the museum is being exploited for political purposes. This fear is also shared by the Canadian Association of University Teachers, which represents 60,000 members. As the member of Parliament for the riding in which the museum is located, I also share that fear.

Since coming to power, the Conservatives have made repeated attempts to redefine Canadian identity.

The tens of millions of dollars of public money they spent on festivities to commemorate the War of 1812 is clear evidence of this, as is the completely pointless and costly addition of the adjective “royal” to the designation of Canada's navy and air force.

The Canadian Museum of Civilization is too important an institution to be exploited. No one has asked for changes to the status quo.

Even just changing the museum's name will cost approximately \$500,000. I am confident that Canadians do not approve of that kind of expense, especially given the current climate of budget cuts.

I am confident that Canadians would rather have good jobs instead of expenditures on a museum they hold dear and changes that they did not ask for.

No one in the region was consulted before the government announced its intentions. Public consultations were organized to determine what people want to see on exhibit in the new museum, not to determine if they agree with changing the museum's mission or name. That is not the way to do things. Canadians are open to the world and they expect that of their museum as well.

Since it opened, the museum has been extraordinarily successful. This is the most popular museum in Canada: 1.3 million people pass through its doors every year. It is a huge tourist attraction for Hull—Aylmer. In addition, it is a economic driver and a significant source of jobs.

Tourism workers agree with me that the museum is successful largely because it has a combination of exhibits on Canadian history and temporary exhibits on other cultures around the world. All of that will change with Bill C-7, which would turn the museum into an institution that focuses almost exclusively on Canadian history.

I have a hard time believing this government when it says it truly cares about Canadian history and heritage. Just last year it eliminated more than 200 jobs at Library and Archives Canada. At Parks Canada, 80% of the archeologists were shown the door.

I do not think that laying off hundreds of public servants who are responsible for preserving and promoting our shared heritage positively contributes to showcasing our Canadian history. It is quite the opposite.

We want to maintain the museum's existing mandate, which already has a considerable focus on Canadian history. The vast majority of the museum's resources are already allocated to exhibits on Canada, and Canadians have shown that the current formula works for them. As they say, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

One of my constituents' main concerns is that the Canadian Museum of Civilization will turn into a second war museum. The government has been very clear that it intends to plan several military celebrations for Canada's 150th anniversary.

I have no problem with having the museum showcase the 150th anniversary. What I do have a problem with, as do my constituents, is using the 150th anniversary as an excuse to change the mandate of the most popular museum in Canada.

● (1625)

On that, we disagree.

I can hear government members say that the museum is an independent body and that the government cannot influence the content of its exhibits. If the government had not lost the confidence of Canadians and the opposition parties, we might believe that. However, in the current climate, no one can trust the government.

In May 2012, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages did not hesitate to publicly criticize the exhibit the Museum of Science and Technology chose to put on. The museum wanted to present an exhibit on sex education. According to the minister—who says he has nothing to do with museums and does not interfere in their decisions—this was an insult to taxpayers.

The government has never hesitated to bend the rules to pressure institutions that are deemed to be independent. We are seeing this right now in the Senate, which is also supposed to be independent. We know the score. It is far from independent.

One of the problems with Bill C-7 is the proposed mandate, which sets out not only the museum's general direction, but also the historical approach it should adopt. This approach is restrictive. It does not leave any room to showcase important developments in our shared history, such as gender relations and the impact of colonization on first nations, for example.

Normally, decisions about the type of approach adopted by a museum are left up to the museum's professionals and historians, specifically to avoid political interference. Who better than the museum's professionals and historians to determine the museum's exhibits now and in the future?

That is not what we have here. These are not the decisions of our professionals, who are opposed to this bill.

For all these reasons, we are voting against Bill C-7 at third reading.

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[*English*]

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that members from all parties have an opportunity to stand to speak to bills that are presented in the House and also have an opportunity to respond to questions; however, the last two speakers have misinformed the public. Either their speaking notes are incorrect or they do not know enough about the issue to be able to speak to it or they are actually misleading the public in terms of what the legislation would do.

This is a very straightforward bill. Bill C-7 makes it very clear who would develop, operate, and maintain branches or exhibit centres, who would acquire property by gift, and who would, in fact, run the facilities.

We have never intended nor have we ever suggested in any way, shape, or form—and, most importantly, it is not in the very legislation that is before the House today—that the government is going to interfere with the operations of the museums, specifically the operations of the Canadian museum of history.

I want to give the member an opportunity to clarify her remarks, to withdraw what she said, and to put on the record what is actually the truth.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, if Canadians trusted this government, we could have an open discussion and then come up with a bill dealing with a museum, or another bill dealing with another activity that would benefit Canadians. Sadly, that is not the case.

In the last two years, the climate of trust has been shattered. The government has interests that are contrary to those of Canadians.

This government has still not answered the question about the \$25 million. This is not additional money; the museum is going to be changed with existing money. Which programs are they going to abolish? What is going to happen?

•(1630)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Canadian Museum of Civilization is in her constituency, but it also belongs to all Canadians.

She emphasized that the Canadian Museum of Civilization is interested in the whole world, thereby helping us to better understand our Canadian uniqueness. I would therefore like to give her the opportunity to express her fears that the museum is going to lose a lot of its ability to connect with the whole world.

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

The museum is indeed in my constituency, but I understand that it also belongs to all Canadians. In fact, that is why I mentioned that, in Canada, it is the museum that attracts the most visitors, both from Canada and from other countries.

In terms of the lack of trust, in recent years we have seen everything focused on celebrating bygone wars and military

activities. Yes, it is good to remember past military activities and wars.

That said, is that what a museum of civilization has to become? I am not saying that it will happen, but I am saying that it is a fear born of previous experience. It is important to open ourselves to the world and to have other experiences, but it is also important to keep what we already have.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to commend my two colleagues for their excellent speeches, which clearly explained the NDP's concerns about this transformation and these changes to the museum's mandate.

I would like to ensure that we have fully understood the key components of these regulations, which were presented in a catch-all bill that changes the museum's mandate. However, the bill also includes many bonuses. For example, artifacts will travel all over Canada and a student program will be established, among other things. These are all wonderful and noble ideas. However, of course, these exchanges are not scheduled to occur until 2017. That is fine.

Does my colleague not find that, although the people who will be an integral part of these artifact exchanges support them, their support is completely undermined by a lack of confidence in this government, which has demonstrated, time and time again, how it likes to abuse its powers? I am thinking, for example, of the commemoration of the War of 1812.

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question.

It is unfortunate. In a climate of mistrust, people have a hard time believing that the government's proposals are in the best interests of all Canadians and not just based on ideologies that go completely against the museum's aim and mandate. It is important for Canadians and the entire world to know our history. It is important for Canadians to know the history of foreign countries and see what is happening there.

There is also concern that small museums will end up competing with the Canadian Museum of Civilization. That could be dangerous because the mission or primary purpose of this museum and museums outside the national capital region could be forgotten.

[*English*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-7 is to replace the Canadian Museum of Civilization with the Canadian museum of history. The Liberal opposition will vote against it, and I will explain why.

[*Translation*]

The history of Canada deserves to be more well known. In spite of some sombre pages, each one of its chapters is replete with remarkable passages. Canada's history is remarkable and the birth of a museum devoted to its history should not lead to the closing of a museum devoted to the legacy of humanity. We must not let the Canadian Museum of Civilization disappear.

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What other democracy has transformed a museum of civilization into a national museum of history? This is not to the Conservative government's credit. This shows the Conservative government's narrow point of view. This diminishes the grandeur of Canada's history.

I am a liberal in the partisan sense of the word, but especially in the philosophical sense. I see, as many do, that the universal is greater than the national. I am convinced, as are many others, that humanity is more than the sum of its parts.

I have concluded, and I am not alone in doing so, that to truly understand the unique nature of one's national history, we must have knowledge of the history of civilization.

Everyone would applaud a new national history museum, but not at the price of hijacking a museum of civilization that is so important, so celebrated and so loved.

• (1635)

[English]

The *Ottawa Citizen* said, “the museum of history should be in addition to, and not a replacement for, the Canadian Museum of Civilization”. Even if the mission of this proposed museum of history does not completely overlook all that is not strictly Canadian, it seems to treat what is sometimes called the history of others as an ancillary topic, an afterthought.

In a radical perspective reversal, the government seeks to replace the Canadian Museum of Civilization's current mandate, which is to increase knowledge for human cultural achievements and human behaviour with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, with a revised mandate that would, instead, focus first and foremost on what has shaped Canada's history and identity. Although we are told that exhibitions demonstrating world history and cultures will still be part of the new museum's mandate, it will be so in a diluted form, suggesting that this class of exhibition will hold second-tier place in the new museum's lineup.

Within the Canadian Museum of Civilization's mandate lie the opportunity and responsibility to create world history and cultural presentations. Changing the museum's mandate increases the risk that highly popular, important, multinational artifacts may be considered to be outside the scope of the new museum, rejected for exhibition and even removed from the museum's existing collection. Furthermore, Bill C-7 would remove another *raison d'être* from the museum's mandate: establishing, maintaining and developing collections for research and posterity.

[Translation]

It is not as though our Canadian Museum of Civilization has not carried out its mission in a satisfactory manner. On the contrary, the former Minister of Canadian Heritage lavished praise on this museum. He was quite pleased to use its excellent national and international reputation to promote a new museum. The minister stated in the House, on May 22, 2013, “We will build on its reputation and popularity...”

The government says that it deplores the fact that not all MPs are as supportive of this museum as they were of the creation of the Canadian War Museum or the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Those museums were not built on the ashes of our Canadian Museum of Civilization, a renowned jewel, a great success and the most popular museum in the national capital region.

The government wants to spend \$25 million, but we do not know where this money comes from. What cuts did the government make to find this \$25 million? We do not know. It wants to spend \$25 million, not on a new museum, but to replace an existing museum that everyone admires.

Would it not have been more useful and responsible to use that money to improve the existing Canadian Museum of Civilization? No, the Conservative government wanted to give the impression that it is creating something new. It is not that new, and it is destroying something that worked quite well.

What can we expect from a government that is more concerned about its image than the public good and that is more interested in using history for its own partisan agenda than in sharing it for its intrinsic teachings?

• (1640)

[English]

How many controlled and artistic events, paid for with public money, have the government used to promote its self-serving partisan-driven view of Canadian history?

Fresh in our memories are the lavish, publicly-funded celebrations of the War of 1812, not a bad thing per se but did the government have to try, so obviously, to get so much partisan mileage out of that.

Also fresh in our memories is the undignified and appalling refusal to acknowledge and celebrate in the proper way a significant anniversary of one of Canada's most important and revered accomplishments, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This is how James L. Turk, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, expressed his concern that the government would use the museum for its own ideological ends. I quote from his December 9, 2012, letter to the *Toronto Star*. He said:

From the federal government's first announcement of the proposed new Canadian Museum of History, some have expressed fear that the new museum would be a parochial institution designed to reflect the [Conservative] government's ideological version of our history.

What else to expect from a government that slashed \$191.1 million from the heritage portfolio budget, killing art and cultural programs and forcing Canadians to pay for access to the digitized heritage materials in collections that already belong to them?

[Translation]

What can we hope for from a government that claims to be so concerned about history, yet keeps undermining how it can be studied? What can we expect from a government that fires more than 80% of the archaeologists and conservators who looked after our historic sites? What is this government thinking? It is keeping only about 10 archaeologists at Parks Canada to cover a country as vast as ours. What can be made of a government that takes New France-era artifacts from Quebec City and sends them to Ottawa or one that is replacing a civilization museum with a history museum?

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Counterproductive transfers are just another part of this government's twisted logic.

Parks Canada, Library of Parliament, Library and Archives Canada, Statistics Canada: is there a single witness to our history that has not been in the Conservative government's crosshairs?

What can be made of a government that is inviting Canadians to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017?

Clearly, it is the 150th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada that we will be celebrating. Why have Canada's history start in 1867 and ignore thousands of years of our people's history?

If the Conservatives believe that Canada began in 1867, how is it possible that François-Xavier Garneau wrote the history of Canada in 1845?

Instead of rewriting our history, the government would do well to respect it.

The Liberals will vote against this bill for the reasons I mentioned, but primarily because we have too much respect for our history, for its study and teaching to have to choose between it and learning about the civilizations our very history is based on.

Our history is neither the most illustrious nor the most dramatic— if by that, we mean pomp, conquest and military might. However, at the risk of sounding provocative, I will argue that there are few histories closer to the democratic ideal than Canada's. Even with its failures and darker moments, and its never-ending regional squabbles, the history of Canada compares favourably with that of other countries in terms of the values associated with liberal democracy. For that reason alone, we must both know it and make it known, because it carries a wealth of lessons for the future.

Historian Ged Martin, a professor at the University of Edinburgh, wrote: “In the crucial combination of mass participation, human rights and self-government, Canada's history is second to none in the world.”

I can think of no achievement of which a country could be prouder. If this government were fully aware of this, it would not have virtually ignored the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 2012. This government would not have stopped, for all intents and purposes, supporting Canadian studies abroad. It would not have weakened so many invaluable institutions dedicated to the study of our history.

In fact, Canada was born long before 1867. It was born out of the relentless pursuit of a dream, a dream of harmony between peoples and firmly rooted in the principles of civilization. What is most admirable about Canada, especially to the rest of the world, has less to do with what is particular to it, such as its often-sung vastness, than with what is universal. The Canadian ideal is that of a country where human beings have the best chance to be considered as human beings, valued for everything they are, regardless of race, religion, history and cultural background. We should never stop trying to live up to that ideal.

To this end, an essential condition for success is the awareness that we cannot understand the history of our country separately from the

history of civilization. They are intertwined. We, the Liberals, understand that. That is why we will be voting against Bill C-7.

• (1645)

[English]

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that there is a continued bogeyman theory that both the opposition parties seem to use when it comes to legislation. They make some attempt to say that the government wants to involve itself in the operations of every Crown agency across the country. Even if that were true, which it is not, legislation and regulation would stand in the way.

I want to iterate, and get the member's comments on, section 27.(1) of the Museums Act, which we are not changing. It states very clearly:

No directive shall be given to a museum under section 89 or subsection 114(3) of the *Financial Administration Act* with respect to cultural activities, including (a) the acquisition, disposal, conservation or use of any museum material relevant to its activities; (b) its activities and programs for the public, including exhibitions, displays and publications; and (c) research with respect to the matters referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b).

We are not touching this part of the act. Will the member not acknowledge that the direction of the museum is not going to be touched? In fact, it will be left to those who are entrusted with that right now.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, the main reason our caucus will vote against the bill is that we do not agree with the change of mandate. We do not like the idea that to focus on Canadian history, we need to get rid of the Museum of Civilization. We do not think it is Canadian to do this kind of thing. Canada celebrates what is universal around the world. In this way, we better understand Canada's history. Canada exists in the world. Canada is pleased to study the world and is pleased to have a museum on the world. It is a shame to shift this focus and destroy a museum that is so well regarded around the world.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Saint-Laurent—Cartierville for his important contribution to the debate. I taught history for years and I am still quite passionate about it.

I would like to hear what the hon. member has to say about one of the things that bothers me a bit here. One of the proposed changes to the mandate, to section 8, suggests eliminating the phrase “critical understanding”.

One of the first things I teach is that even though history tries to shed light on events that have happened, the understanding of these events is never over and evolves over time as historical documents and artifacts give us the points of view of everyone involved.

By replacing critical understanding with the simple notion of general understanding, does this shift not run the risk of resulting more in propaganda and less in a true understanding of historical events?

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•(1650)

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right, but the problem is that the governing party, the Prime Minister in particular, is allergic to criticism.

Since they are allergic to criticism, they have removed critical understanding from the mandate. That is one of the reasons we must oppose this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could I get my colleague to expand on the idea of the current mandate and how Canadians have an expectation that goes beyond getting a better understanding of Canada? In fact, it is important for us to have a better understanding of the world. Changing the mandate, which would tend to exclude other regions outside of Canada, is not necessarily in the best interests of all Canadians.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member reads my speech, and I am sure it will be read everywhere in Canada, he will see how much I love my country and its history.

I am not aware of another country that would get rid of a museum of civilization to make it a museum of national history. The last country I would suspect would do such a thing is Canada, because so much of Canada is universal.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I approach this issue with a fair degree of trepidation, because I think I might find myself somewhere between opposition members and government members. When I read Bill C-7, which was Bill C-49, I cannot find anywhere in the text of the bill the desire to destroy the Canadian Museum of Civilization or the new Canadian museum of history.

The mandate I find in the text is,

...to enhance Canadians' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of events, experiences, people and objects that reflect and have shaped Canada's history and identity, and also to enhance their awareness of world history and cultures.

In other words, I see what is happening at the Museum of Civilization. I can see that what is happening with the current management is disruptive to individual researchers. I read this in the press. However, I do not find malicious intent in the text of the bill, and that is what we have before us.

I ask my friend for guidance.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: In fact, Mr. Speaker, the mandate is a reversal of the former mandate. The former mandate was to focus on civilizations around the world, and through that, to learn about Canada. The new mandate is the exact opposite. We will focus on Canada, and as an afterthought, we will look at—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Stéphane Dion: In fact, I would be very pleased to have a museum of Canadian history. The problem is that killing the Museum of Civilization to do that is not something the government should be proud of.

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the debate this afternoon. Only the Liberals and the NDP could be opposed to our country wanting to celebrate our great history through a wonderful national museum. Not only would it be

a national museum in the national capital region that Canadians could come and visit, but more important, the bill would allow small museums all across the country to have the opportunity to have artifacts go out to them.

Not every Canadian can afford to come to the national capital region and visit our national museum. This bill would allow small museums, like ones in Mississauga, Ontario, to apply to have artifacts come to them in the local community so that every Canadian could experience the wonderful history of this country.

Maybe the hon. member could explain why he does not want constituents in my riding to celebrate Canadian history by not having these artifacts come to my community.

•(1655)

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, if it was for that purpose only, we would all agree to facilitate the ability to have artifacts circulating everywhere in Canada, including in the riding of my hon. colleague. It would be a very novel objective.

However, the government is destroying the Museum of Civilization in order to create another museum, with only \$25 million, and is claiming that it is creating a new museum. However, we do not know where that \$25 million is coming from. My hon. colleague should check. Maybe it has been taken from something in his riding.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on what the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands referred to in terms of the bill. It is straightforward. The mandate is clear, and I actually think it is worth repeating:

The purpose of the Canadian Museum of History is to enhance Canadians' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of events, experiences, people and objects that reflect and have shaped Canada's history and identity, and also to enhance their awareness of world history and cultures.

The member said he thought the move of the Museum of Civilization to the Canadian museum of history was in some way not Canadian. Based on the mandate, based on the objectives that are trying to be accomplished through this piece of legislation and the Canadian museum of history, would he please explain to me why he would say that it is not Canadian to create the Canadian museum of history?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, we would all applaud and we would vote unanimously if it were not an opportunity for the government to destroy a museum that is working very well and that is helping people understand Canadian history through their understanding of the world's civilizations. That is the point I have made.

I am not aware of another country that has done that, and I did not hear my colleague mention one.

We have a Museum of Civilization that is celebrated around the world. It is one of the best museums we have, and now we do not want it anymore. We want a museum of national history. I would say, and I said it in my speech, that humanity is more than the sum of its components. Humanity is something in Canada we are proud to celebrate, study, and have a museum about.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Wild Rose.

I am very happy to speak in support of Bill C-7, which proposes amendments to the Museums Act in order to create the Canadian museum of history.

All Canadians deserve to benefit from the richness of our history. For the first time, Canada will have a national museum dedicated to telling our country's stories. Our government is proud to support Canada's museums as they are important vehicles of our cultural and social history.

Canada's museums are also important instruments of culture. They generate important economic benefit for local and national economies. Museums help to drive economic activity in many ways, including through blockbuster exhibitions and as general tourist attractions. It is well known that local, national and international visitors tour our museums, and the institutions themselves contribute immensely to our country's economic well-being.

According to the latest Statistics Canada data, this last decade has witnessed a strong increase in the number of museum visits by Canadians. Up until 1998, only a third of Canadians, 32.3%, visited a museum every year. Today, almost three quarters of Canadians visit a museum in Canada each year. This is a clear sign that Canadians want to learn about their history and consider these cultural institutions to be Canadian treasures.

Canadians recognize that Canada's museums are world-class and cultural treasures. According to the Canadian Museums Association, 96% of Canadians believe that museums contribute to the quality of life of our nation. According to the same study, 97% said that they believed that museums did an excellent job of preserving and presenting our history.

Many would be surprised to know that there are over 2,500 museums in Canada that welcomed more than 27 million visitors in 2009, and this legislation would make it easier for smaller museums outside our nation's capital to get those exhibits. For the first time, Canada's largest museum would have the ability to share a part of its collection with smaller museums across the country. This is something that the people in my riding of Leeds—Grenville are looking forward to and they hope it happens very soon. These smaller museums would now be able to exhibit new collections of Canadian cultural artifacts for Canadians who would not have the opportunity to come to Ottawa, the nation's capital.

I would like to note that in 2010, numbers in domestic tourism visits to museums alone helped to generate over \$3.4 billion into the Canadian economy. Spending by foreign tourists to museums added another \$1.75 billion to the Canadian economy. The figures I have just quoted include the benefits of many other industries from spending by tourists who visit museums, comprising commercial airlines, hotels and restaurants, as well as retail shops and a number of others that help to accommodate tourists travelling to our local and national museums across this great country.

I would also like to bring to the attention of the House the employment that is generated by these many museums. Canadian museums employ over 25,000 people across the country. I should also note that there are over 40,000 volunteer workers who dedicate hundreds of thousands of person years to these same museums. I

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would like to thank all of those volunteers for their hard work in helping tell part of our history. I know, once again, that in the museums in my riding of Leeds—Grenville many volunteers help.

Without the help of these hard-working volunteers from across Canada, who give part of their time to keep our museums running, we would simply not be able to share our stories with Canadians and our many visitors each year. Furthermore, the incredible number of volunteers demonstrates how much Canadians care about the success of our museums as institutions that tell our stories.

Museums are job creators and they support the economic well-being of many Canadians across the country. One example that I would like to share with the House today is the economic impact of the Renoir exhibition hosted by the National Gallery of Canada in 1997. Close to \$33.2 million was spent in Ontario and Quebec by visitors whose main reason was to visit the Renoir exhibition.

● (1700)

Approximately 825 jobs were required to produce the \$33.2 million in goods and services directly associated with that Renoir exhibition. In other words, and I would like to reiterate, if the Renoir exhibition had not been at the National Gallery of Canada, the two provinces would not have enjoyed the economic benefits of \$33.2 million in value-added additional jobs, wages, salaries and tax revenues for the government created by direct consumer spending.

It is also estimated that the taxes directly associated with the Renoir exhibition totalled almost \$12.7 million for all three levels of government combined.

In my home province of Ontario, in 2010, 3.4 million tourists visited museums or art galleries. In 2010, arts and culture tourists spent \$1.1 billion on lodging, \$1.1 billion on food and beverages, \$600 million on retail and \$500 million on entertainment and recreation.

As I said earlier, the economic impact of museums and cultural spaces across this great country is undeniable. With that, I am confident that the new Canadian museum of history will similarly benefit from the interests of all Canadians and others who wish to learn and experience Canada's vast and rich history through newly-created programs and exhibitions soon to be provided by the Canadian museum of history.

Our government is very proud of our country's museums. That is why we have opened two new museums since forming government: the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg and the Canadian Museum for Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax, which I have had the pleasure of visiting.

We have also increased funding for summer internships for students and small and medium-sized museums. In my riding of Leeds—Grenville, the Brockville museum took advantage of that program this past summer.

This year, some 1,600 students will be hired to work and learn in museums across the country. This is a strong record that our government will continue to build on.

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To conclude, as we approach Canada's 150th birthday, Canadians will have a new museum that will highlight the moments of the people and the objects that have shaped our great country.

I hope all members will support Bill C-7 in order to create the Canadian museum of history and help tell the great stories of our great country.

• (1705)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the member tell us where the \$25 million will come from? What will be cut to find this money?

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, I am a little disappointed that we have the opposition parties opposing this bill and the new Canadian museum of history when we have heard so many positive comments.

I happened to have been sitting on the Canadian heritage committee this year before the summer when we had the previous Bill C-49 in front of us. We heard from so many people who were involved in history in Canada.

For example, we heard from Michael Bliss, who is a renowned Canadian historian and award-winning author. He said that it was very exciting that Canada's major museum would now be explicitly focused on Canada's history.

The bill is all about that. It is a museum to celebrate Canada's history.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my riding, hundreds of people are fighting to save an historic site called the Forges du Saint-Maurice. It was the first ironworks in Canada, probably where the cannonballs for the War of 1812 were made, but that has yet to be proven.

People simply cannot understand why, year after year, the government keeps cutting Parks Canada's budgets, reducing operating hours, shortening the length of the season and shortening shifts. It has stopped all new funding to the park. If this is not a concrete example of Canadian history that deserves to be improved, I do not know what is. I do not understand how the government can distort a museum's mission, and at the same time allow places that have made history, places with major historical significance, to languish and gather dust.

[English]

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with what is going on in the member's riding, but I can say that this government has invested millions and millions of dollars in our national historic sites. I am going to use the example of Fort Henry.

Years ago, before I was elected to this place, I served as the chairman of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. It is a provincial agency that operates Fort Henry, but Fort Henry in Kingston is owned by the federal government. Back around that time there was a serious concern about the long-term future of Fort Henry. However, with this government and the investment of millions and millions of dollars, today Fort Henry is a shining example of a national historic site that is doing very well and attracting a lot of people.

However, the other part of the bill that I am very excited about is the fact that we will have these displays coming to smaller communities across the country. I said in my presentation that not everyone can find the time or the money to come to the nation's capital, but they will be able to celebrate our history across the country.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I think there is reason that opposition bench members for the most part are against this change. That is because the things we are seeing happening at the Museum of Civilization have apparently become politicized. In my mind, that is separate from the legislation. This is something that is occurring in relation to the management of the museum, which this legislation does not dictate.

We are already seeing this. I read in the *Ottawa Citizen* that researchers who were doing important work on aspects of Inuit tradition and culture were being cut off from their access to research materials. Museums are living, breathing things and also are involved with research.

When the hon. member looks at Bill C-7, does he see anything that would restrict access to critical research material to Canadian leading academics who traditionally have been able to use museums for that purpose?

• (1710)

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, I do not see anything in the bill that would restrict that. It is clear in the legislation that governs our museums that they cannot be politicized, that they are independent and that the bill in no way jeopardizes the independence of the soon to be Canadian museum of history.

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to contribute to this discussion on Bill C-7, a bill that would establish the new Canadian museum of history.

I would like to use this opportunity to remind the House of the importance of museums to our society, our identity, our unity, and our future as Canadians.

Our government values our museums and has demonstrated our support in a number of tangible ways. We have spoken also of the network that the new Canadian museum of history will lead. This network will connect Canada's history museums across the country so that they can access some of the 3 million items that are in the national collection.

Like most museums, the Canadian Museum of Civilization has the vast majority of its collection in storage. The future Canadian museum of history will be negotiating agreements in every single province and territory in this country so that it can get this collection moving across the country.

History is all around us; we are just not always consciously aware of it. Are members aware that the more than 2,500 museums in Canada welcome more than 27 million visitors every year?

Our museums are where many Canadians learn about their history. Our museums have a myriad of stories to tell, stories of grand accomplishments, perseverance, struggle, community, tragedy, and triumph.

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As was already noted by the member for Leeds—Grenville in the previous intervention, according to the Canadian Museums Association, 96% of Canadians believe that museums contribute to the quality of life in our nation. Furthermore, 97% believe that museums do an excellent job of preserving and presenting our history.

Recently our government announced that museums across Canada will be able to share their exhibits with the Canadian museum of history and be able to access the new museum's collection.

To make it possible to share this rich collection with all Canadians, changes are being made to the federal museums assistance program in order to remove barriers to the circulation of museum exhibitions interprovincially and to financially assist small museums in borrowing objects and exhibitions from the Canadian museum of history.

We know that it is expensive to host and move exhibits and artifacts. That is why this government thought it was important to help smaller museums across the country access the national collection of the Canadian museum of history and make sure the artifacts could be displayed all across our country. That is exactly what our government is doing. Smaller museums often do not have the capacity to acquire an artifact to complete their collection or simply to be able to add an exhibit for their visitors. With the new support that we are putting in place, it would be easier for smaller museums to approach the Canadian museum of history and access its extensive national collection.

I would also like to point out that it has been more than 20 years since the current Canadian Museum of Civilization has been updated in a significant way. Therefore, it is time to refresh its mandate and orientation so that a new Canadian museum of history can focus on the story of this great country.

As has been mentioned in past debates, the Children's Museum will continue to be an integral part of the new museum; so will the Grand Hall and the First Peoples Hall, which present chapters of our story that are of immense importance, the history of Canada's first peoples.

At the same time, a significant part of the museum's success will be its ability to reach all Canadians and tell their stories, the stories of the people who helped build this country and those who continue to do so today. With that goal in mind, the future Canadian museum of history is signing partnership agreements with a number of museums to establish a nationwide museum network.

This new national museum will work with museums all across Canada to help ensure that our country's achievements and accomplishments are highlighted. We know that museums develop pride in local traditions and customs and that they help people to feel a sense of belonging and involvement in their community. Museums and the programming they support promote co-operation among different cultures and different age groups and help to create community and social networks.

As the creation of the Canadian museum of history shows, our government values the role that museums play in preserving and commemorating our past.

●(1715)

By the time we celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, Canadians will have a new museum that highlights the moments, the people, and the objects that have helped to shape our great country.

I ask that the members of the House consider the statement by one of Canada's best known and most respected historians, Michael Bliss, when he said that our collective history is our collective memory. He added that without memory, people become unmoored, adrift, lost, and said that was why so many people work so hard to preserve our national memories, our sense of ourselves as Canadians—as a people who have had a long and rich common experience.

Since the announcement in October 2012 of the transformation of the Canadian Museum of Civilization into the Canadian museum of history, we have heard from many organizations that enthusiastically support this change. I would like to read just a few of those quotes from some of those individuals.

John McAvity is the executive director of the Canadian Museums Association. He said, “The Museum is developing equal partnerships with other history museums across Canada. ... That is good news.”

A press release from the Ontario Museum Association said that the OMA “...welcomes the initiative to strengthen partnerships among museums in Ontario and across the country.” Marie Lalonde, executive director of the OMA, also said, “...we welcome the opportunity to explore new ways that museums may work with each other.” She added that they look forward to the new direction announced by the government.

To go a little further with a couple of additional quotes, Marie Senécal-Tremblay, the president of the Fédération canadienne des amis des musées, said that this announcement will allow small museums to better showcase their unique collections to many more Canadians and visitors.

Finally, Jack Granatstein, a prominent Canadian historian, said, “This move is exactly what I thought should happen” and “I'm delighted the government and the museum are doing it.”

This is very clear support for the moves being made by our government, and very clear particularly in relation to the fact that we are looking to share that very vast national collection with museums all across this country. It is important to note that.

Clearly, our commitment to Canada's museums is real and ongoing. In the last fiscal year alone, this government invested approximately \$355 million in museums and heritage institutions. Our government has made key investments in the museum sector. This includes support for two new national museums, namely the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax. We have also increased funding for summer internships in small and medium-sized museums. This year, some 1,600 students were hired to work and learn in museums all across the country.

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In my riding alone, here are just a few of the examples of many I could name. One is the Peter and Catharine Whyte Foundation, which was able to hire a summer intern to help with its work. Another is the Centennial Museum Society of Canmore. There is also the Luxton Museum Society in Banff National Park, where they have preserved the local first nations history. Those are great examples from my riding of Wild Rose alone.

Now we are embarking on the creation of the Canadian museum of history. In 2017 we will celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, and as we approach that important date, the timing seems right to pause and rethink the way we tell our story to Canadians and visitors from abroad.

Our museums hold the cultural wealth of the nation for all generations, both past, present, and future. Museums play a central role in giving Canadians the resources to celebrate why Canada is such a unique and great country.

Let us all join together to create the national Canadian museum of history as the institution that will capture our lived experiences.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Wild Rose for his speech. I had the pleasure of working with him in support of Canadian tourism on our all-party committee.

However, I would like to say how disappointed I was in his speech on this bill regarding the new museum. I would like to talk about everything that no one else is talking about: how much this is going to devastate and destroy the expertise and the collections that Parks Canada once had.

I am honoured to say that my riding is home to the place where Jacques Cartier first spent a winter. It is central to the founding of our country. At this time, the welcome centre at the Cartier-Brébeuf Park sits empty. Over 20 years ago, my son, who was really young at the time, and I had the pleasure of going, even in the cold months, to try the drink that helped Jacques Cartier and his crew make it through the winter and avoid scurvy.

Can my colleague comment on this slashing of Parks Canada resources in relation to this terrible bill?

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I and my colleague do, of course, have many discussions about tourism, as he is involved in the tourism caucus, and I certainly appreciate those.

However, I am troubled by his opposition and that of his party to a bill that would certainly assist some of our fine local small and medium-sized museums all across this country. As well, in terms of tourism, this bill is a great way to generate visitors to communities, because this measure would allow the new Canadian museum of history to share the artifacts it has, and vice versa: museums would share their artifacts with the Canadian museum of history as well, so that more Canadians could enjoy the rich history stored in many of the 2,500 museums across this country.

There is a museum in my home town of Olds, Alberta. My grandma was one of the first telephone operators in Alberta, and

when the museum brought in some of the equipment that she used to work on, she was proud that people would be able to see that part of our history. Being able to share collections with museums like the one in Olds provides the opportunity for many more Canadians to be drawn in to a museum like that to see the things that people who built this country are so proud of. I find it troubling that the NDP would not support those kinds of things for their communities as well.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of Canadian Heritage had only nice words and praise for the Canadian Museum of Civilization, so why does he want to get rid of this museum?

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, although I have to say I believe that when one listens to the premise of the question itself, it is misleading, which is unfortunate.

As I mentioned in my speech, it has been more than 20 years since there has been any significant refreshing of the mandate. To look at this mandate and create the Canadian museum of history is something that should be celebrated, and I think it has the support of many Canadians. I have already read a number of very supportive quotes from a number of prominent Canadian historians and directors of museum societies who clearly believe that the government is moving in a great direction, not only to be able to better share our vast national collection that is housed there with some of the smaller museums across the country, as I have already highlighted, but also because it allows a greater celebration of who we are as Canadians and how we got to be that way. It is something we need to celebrate. It is unfortunate that the member would ask a misleading question.

We are very proud of the fact that we are refreshing and updating this mandate and that we will be able to provide that experience and those collections to more Canadians all across this great country.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

I must inform the member that he has only five minutes to speak.

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be quick. I will share my time with a colleague if this debate comes up again in the coming weeks or months.

I am honoured to rise and speak to Bill C-7, especially since I recently had the pleasure of being appointed to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. It will be my pleasure to contribute to the excellent work already done by my colleague from Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, who is the official opposition's heritage critic.

Bill C-7 amends the Museums Act in order to establish the Canadian museum of history and makes consequential amendments to other acts. We will oppose this bill at third reading for several reasons. I will have time to speak about a few of those reasons today.

The Canadian Museum of Civilization, as it stands now with its current mandate, is the most popular museum in Canada based on number of visitors. Its temporary exhibits on world cultures make it a huge tourist draw in the Ottawa-Gatineau region.

I will quickly go over the change in the museum's mandate because I have very little time. The current mandate dates back to 1990. The mandate of the British Museum in England must be 140 years old. It is completely ridiculous to claim that the museum needs a new mandate because museum mandates apparently expire.

In 1990, the museum was given the mandate to increase, throughout Canada and internationally, interest in, knowledge and critical understanding of and appreciation and respect for human cultural achievements and human behaviour.

The new mandate is an impoverished one. It does not include the idea of critical understanding. No longer is there the idea of increasing knowledge throughout Canada and internationally. This idea has been replaced by enhancing Canadians' understanding and appreciation of events, experiences, people and objects.

The whole notion of knowledge and critical understanding, based on better knowledge of events, is gone. The government has gotten rid of the notions of knowledge and the context of global knowledge. That is it. We are moving on to something else, Canadians only. The government is caught up in the Conservative vision of Canadian history, all heroes and major events. The social aspect is completely gone.

What do the Conservatives have against scientific facts and knowledge?

For example, we saw that the Conservatives laid off 80% of Parks Canada's archaeologists. They are shutting down the Maurice Lamontagne Institute, a marine science research centre located in Mont-Joli, in my riding. The purpose of the centre was to provide the government with scientific information in order to help preserve marine life.

It is important to remind the House that this decision goes against the recommendations made by the Commissioner of Official Languages, but that the government will go forward with it all the same.

The Conservatives did away with the national archival development program, which slowed down the work of the archives in communities such as Rivière-du-Loup. These community archives take care of collecting, classifying and conserving the records of all sorts of organizations, businesses, families and associations, thereby building a collective memory and an identity in the regions.

I cannot help but question whether the government's decision to change the Canadian Museum of Civilization into a national history museum is sound. The government's decisions have been very hard on the entire network that works to preserve a national memory.

I do not have much time left, so I will get right to the reasons why we oppose this bill.

The proposed mandate puts an end to the museum's social approach to history. The decision was made without consulting the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage when it was examining

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Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations and without consulting stakeholders in the Outaouais region, historians or the first nations. No one was consulted.

The few consultations that were held were very tightly controlled and did not allow Canadians to question the decision to change the museum's mandate.

The \$25 million for renovations was taken directly from the Canadian Heritage budget. The minister refused to explain where the money in question was coming from. It is very worrisome.

Canadians have reason to fear that the history museum will present a monolithic view of Canadian history that is not representative of Canada's diversity and the diversity of societies throughout the world, which we have had the chance to see at the museum for 20 years now.

For all of these reasons and a number of others that I do not have time to list today, we will oppose Bill C-7 and, until the end of this unfortunate process, we will continue to ask that the Museum of Civilization's current mandate be maintained.

• (1730)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

NATIONAL HUNTING, TRAPPING AND FISHING HERITAGE DAY ACT

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC) moved that Bill C-501, An Act respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to rise in the House today to address Bill C-501, which would formally designate the third Saturday in September every year as Canada's national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day.

Formal designation of a national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day is a federal commemoration of an important aspect of our national history and heritage. These activities are part of our country's heritage and are still enjoyed today by many Canadians. Our government is committed to supporting commemorations and celebrations recognizing that they contribute to the identity, cohesion and sense of belonging of Canadians. Commemoration does not solely deal with the past. Who and what we choose to commemorate as a country speaks volumes about who we are and who we aspire to be in the future.

Private Members' Business

In 2017, we will be celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation. In the lead-up to that celebration it is important that Canadians know about, appreciate and celebrate our history and their traditions that help define who we are as Canadians today. Hunting, trapping and fishing were an integral part of the life of Canada's aboriginal peoples and our first settlers. Fertile soil and crystal clear streams, rivers, lakes and oceans, meant that wild game and fish were abundant across this great territory.

Hunting, trapping and the availability of fish determined where people settled. Hunting trapping and fishing were the first forms of trade and currency and formed the very backbone of Canada's financial structures. Hunting, trapping and fishing helped set the tone as well as the direction of our economic and social development. These activities allowed for the establishment of partnerships between aboriginal peoples and European settlers. From a historical perspective, fur trading played a key role in the creation and exploration of North America and formed the basis of Canada's early economy, an economy today that is one of the most stable in the world today.

I echo the Speech from Throne in stating:

Since Canada's earliest days, our economy has been built on our abundant natural resources. Directly and indirectly, the natural resource sector employs 1.8 million Canadians, many in skilled, high-paying jobs. Resource development generates 30 billion dollars annually in revenue that supports health care, education and programs Canadians cherish.

Recreational fishing and hunting are important to the tourism and natural resource sector. Numerous jobs can be credited directly to hunting, trapping and fishing. Guides, restaurants, lodges, hotels, outfitters, recreational vehicle manufacturers and vendors and many others all rely heavily on hunters, trappers and recreational anglers for their livelihoods.

Hunting, trapping and fishing and the tourism generated by these activities are vital to sustaining some of our country's most remote areas by creating jobs for Canadians. From the Great Lakes to the mountains on Canada's west coast and to the farthest reaches of the north, these pursuits continue to draw people together and entice tourists to visit our country. These outdoor activities are vital to the livelihood of Canada's northern communities, on both cultural and economic levels. Many Canadians living in northern regions rely on hunting, trapping and fishing for their very survival and to fuel their economies by attracting more than 400,000 visitors each year as Canada's north has some of the world's best hunting and fishing opportunities.

The fur trade in Canada contributes over \$800 million to Canada's gross domestic product. The fur trade in our country composes over 60,000 trappers, which includes 25,000 aboriginals, 5,000 fur farmers, manufacturers, dressers, retailers and others.

We cannot forget the people in Atlantic Canada who rely on the sealing industry. Sealing is a time honoured tradition that allows people to provide for their families. In isolated villages where people have limited opportunities for employment, sealing can provide up to 35% of their annual income. Sealing is a renewable resource that provides excellent pelts for clothing, meat for consumption and oil that is rich in Omega fatty acid, a natural supplement.

● (1735)

Anglers contributed a total of \$8.3 billion to various local economies in Canada's provinces and territories in 2010. Recreational fishing is on the rise in our nation. More Canadian adults fish than the total who play golf and hockey combined. In 2010, almost 300,000 more anglers bought a resident fishing licence than in 2005. This amounts to more than an 11.3% increase in just five years.

By supporting Bill C-501, the Government of Canada is in line with similar provincial legislation already in place in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and British Columbia. These provincial recognition efforts provide opportunities for Canadians to come together and remind them about the recreational and economic value of these activities, as well as the importance of acting as stewards of our natural environment for the benefit of future generations.

I can mention only a few organizations, most of which I belong to.

The first one is the Safari Club International. SCI is a conservation-based organization that is frequented by hunters who travel all around this world, ensuring that the dollars they spend on hunting and fishing go toward conservation. I am also a member of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, which is again a conservation-based hunting and fishing organization. I am also a member of the Quinte elk restoration. Today, near the wonderful community of Bancroft, we now have one of the largest herds of elk in eastern Canada.

The Lake Ontario Atlantic salmon restoration efforts occur primarily because of a company called Banrock Station Wines, which has partnered with the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, the OFAH, universities and Fleming College, and we are now introducing an indigenous species of salmon to Lake Ontario: the Atlantic salmon. That is going very well.

It is worth noting that Bill C-501 would not impinge upon provincial or territorial jurisdiction for the regulation of these activities. The bill calls for a nationwide designation of a special day to commemorate the historical role of these traditional activities and to celebrate the part they play in Canada's heritage, social fabric and economy.

A national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day would also be an occasion for Canadian hunters, trappers and anglers to raise awareness about the history of our great country and the role that these activities have played in the exploration and settlement of this country. It would be an opportunity to pass these on to future generations.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

As I have already mentioned, this bill is important to me on a personal level. My grandfather, Narcisse Viens, was a trapper in northern Ontario. I vividly remember the countless trapping stories he would tell my sister, my brothers and me when we were younger. These are the stories I tell to this day when I go hunting or fishing with my friends and family in Ontario, Quebec or British Columbia.

This bill is a way for me to honour those who, like my grandfather, left their mark on Canada's history and whose memories are etched in the minds of their children and grandchildren.

● (1740)

[English]

Hunting, trapping and fishing are not only important to families like mine, but to countless millions of Canadians from the very beginning of this country's settlement to the present day.

I readily recall the joy my father, Ben, and I have when our children are at the hunt camp or sitting in a boat, waiting for that big one to bite. These outdoor activities are not only a time of family togetherness but are part of our DNA. It is who we really are.

The formal designation of the third Saturday in September as an official national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day would raise awareness among Canadians about the important contribution that our hunters, trappers and anglers have made to the settlement of our country, its economy and our identity.

The designation of this day will build on the independent spirit of those Canadians who engage in active recreation. It will encourage Canadians to learn more about our country's history and to travel the trails and waterways of our ancestors.

I ask that all hon. members support the designation of this day as a federal commemoration of an important aspect of our national history and heritage. It may be emotional for some people. It certainly is for this member, whose family has been hunting, trapping, and fishing for generations.

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the comments of my colleague with great interest. There are a number of Canadians who may not like the idea of this day. They are perhaps, all in good conscience, I am sure, opposed to trapping, angling, or hunting.

The member has been with the bill for quite some time now. I wonder if he would like to share with the House whether anyone or any groups he has heard from are opposed to this particular bill.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend comes from northern Ontario and I know is intimate with the subject of the bill. I want to assure him that to the best of my knowledge, neither I nor my office has heard from anyone who objects to this designation. Moreover, every single provincial hunting and fishing organization and association has written to us and has supported this legislation since its original iteration. This is the third time I have brought the bill before the House. We have been interrupted by various elections. There is not a single organization that deals with these subjects in Canada that has not voiced support for its intent. I can only say that they are very enthusiastic that it becomes law in this country.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was deeply honoured when the member for Northumberland—Quinte West asked me to second the bill.

I was very moved by his speech just now, especially when he talked about the family aspect of hunting and fishing. The experiences he recalls mirrored my own. Indeed, my love of hunting and angling caused me to have a career in conservation. The member for Wetaskiwin was exactly the same. He had a great career in conservation. The member for Yukon was a conservation officer for many years. For many of us, our love of conservation and nature stems from our activities as anglers and hunters. The conservation contribution as Canada's anglers, hunters, and trappers is simply remarkable, and it does not get the recognition it deserves.

Would my friend from Northumberland—Quinte West elaborate on the conservation contribution of Canada's anglers, hunters, and trappers?

● (1745)

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, in my speech I mentioned some of the organizations of which I am a member whose primary purpose is conservation.

We now have elk in the province of Ontario that we did not have before, and they are indigenous. We have more turkeys than we can count. I can recall very recently counting at least 90 in a flock in a field near Castleton, in my riding. We have more white-tailed deer in North America now than we did when the European settlers first came here.

I mentioned Banrock Station Wine, an Australian company that is responsible for the beginning of the restoration of Atlantic salmon in Lake Ontario. It partnered with almost every organization in the province, including the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, the OFAH, and others.

My friend, who is, by the way, a biologist, knows much of what I speak and could probably better answer the question than this humble member.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am now the critic for tourism, in addition to a pile of other things. I was very pleased to co-host an event on Monday night here in the House, which I believe the hon. member attended. There was a chance to profile all the many things the outdoors of this country produces.

I was wondering if the member was there. Certainly there was a lot of bear there. I think some of the members probably ate a bit too much of that.

Private Members' Business

The secondary issue is that if we keep recognizing different days for different things, at what point do we run out of days? As much as this is really important, and I am going to support it, what happens when we run out of days, and we get some other critically important issue? Are we going to have to bump something? What will the procedure be later on? Does the member have any suggestions?

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, we can always double them up.

Quite frankly, from my perspective, this is a way of acknowledging something that is hugely important to our country. Most of the days we recognize are hugely important.

The hon. member mentioned the other night and the members who came to partake of almost all the kinds of species we hunt and fish in this country. The member for Yukon, who I have hunted with, actually guided me, my brother, and a friend in northern British Columbia. I know how important it is to the economies of those areas.

Hunting, fishing and trapping is how the first peoples in North America, our aboriginal communities, existed and how they traded. This is just recognizing the importance to our history and to all generations of Canadians.

Before I sit down, I will just say that I only wish that the quarter million new Canadians who come to this country every year recognize and realize the tremendous importance these traditional activities have and that they are able to take part in them.

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member who sponsored the bill, the member representing the fine people of Northumberland—Quinte West. It is his third attempt at seeing the bill through Parliament, so he is nothing if not persistent.

On behalf of my constituents, I thank him for bringing the bill forward again.

The bill is a simple one, a symbolic one and a meaningful one. For many Canadians it goes without saying that hunting, trapping and fishing have always been part of our heritage. From Canada's first people, the original settlers of our continent, to the various waves of immigrants from Europe and other parts of the world, and more recently tourists from all over the globe, people have come to appreciate and respect the beauty and abundance of the natural resources we all share.

The bill plainly states as much and would recognize a day to remind Canadians of this and celebrate that fact. New Democrats recognize the important contributions made by hunting, fishing and trapping-related activities to Canada's social, economic and cultural history.

At this point, it is worth noting that I will be supporting the bill and I will also be encouraging my caucus colleagues to do the same. Perhaps more important than this though, is why.

The specific nature of hunting, fishing and trapping-related activities in Canada can fall under several different categories or types, such as recreational, cultural and traditional, economic, environmental, science-based research. I am sure there are others but these are the first that come to my mind. The frequency, type of activity and impact upon our culture is heavily dependent upon the

geography, economy and history of the various provinces, territories and regions throughout Canada. However, make no mistake, these activities are undertaken by Canadians in every region of every province and territory.

An enormous study with more 85,000 respondents was published in 1996. It was entitled the "Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians". It found that approximately 4.2 million Canadians took part in recreational fishing and about 1.2 million Canadians hunted wildlife in Canada that year.

Consider this fact. More Canadian adults go fishing than play hockey and golf, in fact, more than those two activities combined.

The participation rate in the trapping industry is less today than in the past, but it is important to recognize that there are still thousands of Canadians who engage in these activities for social, economic and cultural reasons throughout Canada. Indeed, much of rural and northern Canada was settled hundreds of years ago as a result of the growing fur trade. Voted Canada's best outdoor attraction, Old Fort William, which is in my riding, celebrates just that.

As for the economic impact of hunting, trapping and fishing-related activities, it too is quite significant. Consider the following economic realities. In 2010, Canadians spent more than \$10 billion on fishing-related activities. The total expenditures generated by outfitted hunting and fishing in Saskatchewan alone came in at more than \$82 million, which helps support more than 4,000 full-time jobs in that fine province. In my home province of Ontario, the net economic benefits associated with recreational hunting alone are more than \$1.5 billion a year.

If I have time, I will speak more later about the economic impact and the popularity of these activities, but I would like to raise two more significant points.

Some Canadians worry about the ethical practices of those who engage in hunting, fishing and trapping. Those are people of good conscience and their concerns transcend these activities, but I would like to assure them that hunters, trappers, anglers and fishers are people of equally strong moral character and conscience. These industries and the hundreds of local, regional and national organizations throughout Canada are clearly committed to the humane treatment of the animals that they encounter in nature and that they harvest.

For instance, the Fur Institute of Canada is committed to upholding and maintaining the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards and the hunters that I know throughout my riding are quite aware of and committed to upholding the hunter's code of conduct, which stresses respect for the environment and wildlife, among other things.

•(1750)

I would be remiss if I did not mention the extremely positive role that is played by all of Canada's hunters, trappers and fishers in protecting our natural environment. For many of these people, a love of nature is a major reason why they partake in these activities. However, it is more than that. It may be hard for some non-participants to understand, but hunters, trappers and fishers share a fundamental respect for the environment and the wildlife with which they engage. They understand and uphold many values and principles that are certainly shared by New Democrats, such as a respect for the environment, a commitment to sustainable human activities and the protection of our nature and wildlife from invasive species, among many others.

To highlight a local example, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, which undertakes to represent the interests of more than 100,000 hunters and anglers in my province, has done some outstanding work on environmental issues. In particular, OFAH, as many affectionately refer to this organization, has made some outstanding contributions in our fight against invasive species like Asian carp, zebra mussels and purple loosestrife, among others, that threaten indigenous species and in fact entire ecosystems.

In Thunder Bay—Rainy River, if one is crossing at one of our three borders to enter Canada from the U.S., one is greeted by OFAH-sponsored signage alerting travellers of the risks of importing devastating new species into our environment. The signage is part of OFAH's aquatic invasive species prevention project in the Lake Superior basin. Other program-related activities include providing classroom presentations to young people throughout our region as to the dangers of invasive species.

On behalf of the people of Thunder Bay—Rainy River, I would like to thank OFAH and, in particular, Greg Farrant from its head office in Peterborough; Glenn Rivard, chair of the Thunder Bay district and Zone B; and Hailey McCallum, a young Canadian who has done some great work in this field for this important project in our region.

For a little more on economics, in a brochure written by the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association there are some statistics from 2010 that I would like to share. I think members will find them quite surprising.

The one statistic that jumped out at me immediately when I first started looking at the brochure was that anglers' expenditures in 2010 across Canada were almost one and a half times the total franchise restaurant sales for Tim Hortons. That was how much was spent just on angling. It was about \$5.6 billion in 2010.

In 2010, anglers' expenditures were more than one and a third times the total sales of wine by wineries, liquor stores and agencies in that year. Also, while I am still talking about alcohol, Canadian anglers' expenditures consistently rival national beer sales.

Almost 300,000 more Canadians bought a resident fishing licence in 2010 than in 2005, which is an increase of 11.3%.

When we talk about catch and release, in 2010, anglers caught 193 million fish, but more than two-thirds of those were returned to the rivers and lakes of this great country.

Private Members' Business

What else happened in 2010? Well, of course, we had Vancouver 2010. Anglers' expenditures were three and a half times the economic contribution of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Therefore, when we talk about economics, we are talking about an important part of our economy when we just talk about angling.

In conclusion, I would like say that I fully recognize the important role that hunting, trapping and angling and fishing have played in the historical development of our country, and will hopefully play in the future. I believe the bill is a fitting tribute to these activities and to the individuals and communities who engage in them. I would like to thank the member for Northumberland—Quinte West again for tabling it.

•(1755)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-501, An Act respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day.

This bill is quite simple. It would designate the third Saturday in September as National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day. This bill would be a symbolic acknowledgement of the contributions of hunters, trappers and anglers to Canadian society. From what I understand—and it is important to mention this—the bill would not create a new legal holiday and, therefore, would not entail any additional cost to Canadian society.

I would like to begin by talking about the historical importance of hunting, trapping and fishing in Canada. Well before the arrival of Europeans in North America, hunting and trapping allowed first nations to survive the harsh Canadian winters. Nomadic peoples, such as the Algonquin and the Inuit, survived by hunting, whereas more sedentary peoples relied more on agriculture than hunting.

The first French and English colonists quickly learned the first nations' hunting techniques in order to adapt to the frigid Canadian winters. For many years, the fur trade was the main source of revenue for the colony of New France. This trade resulted in a unique way of life, that of the *coureurs de bois*.

Courageous young men travelled around Canada to trade with first nations for animal pelts. This way of life continued until well after the Seven Years War and fostered cultural exchanges between European settlers and the first nations.

Private Members' Business

The openness of Canadians and respect for differences were the result, in part, of this trade. Many Canadian towns were founded as a result of the establishment of trading posts. This economic sector spawned such commercial empires as the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. It is not an exaggeration to say that Canada would not be the great, prosperous country it is today without hunting and trapping.

Even today, many Canadians hunt and trap, both as a source of income and for recreation. Some of my colleagues in this House hunt and trap, as they have already said. I think it is a good idea to acknowledge this contribution by establishing a national heritage day, as the United States has done.

Fishing is also one of our country's cornerstones. Canada's aboriginal population has long fished to survive. Certain aboriginal peoples, such as the Inuit, were even able to hunt whales at a time when boats did not perform nearly as well as they do today.

The first European settlers were quickly drawn in by the sheer volume of fish in Canada, and the fishing industry built up quickly. My colleagues, particularly those from the Atlantic provinces, can attest to the importance of fishing to their province's development. Salmon fished near British Columbia has gained international renown and is a valuable part of Canada's economy. Fishing also creates a number of spinoff jobs in processing products and manufacturing fishing equipment, for example.

It has been clearly demonstrated that fishing makes a significant economic contribution to Canada. Of course, predatory commercial fishing practices can harm marine fauna, and that sector needs to be regulated. Decreasing fish stocks in our oceans and lakes is a major concern, and the government has a duty to ensure that those stocks recover. There is more to fishing than the economic angle; it is a way of life for many Canadians across this country. There are far more Canadians who fish recreationally than who do it commercially.

● (1800)

Millions of Canadians fish or have fished for pleasure. While too many Canadians these days prefer to stay at home in front of their television or computer instead of getting outside, the popularity of this pastime and its health benefits must be pointed out.

Earlier, I mentioned the historical significance of hunting, trapping and fishing for the Canadian economy. The numbers speak for themselves. These activities generate \$10 billion in economic spinoffs. For example, more than 3 million Canadians fish, and each year we export more than \$4 billion worth of fish and seafood.

Commercial fishing employs more than 100,000 Canadians. Even trapping, which is less popular than fishing, brings in nearly \$1 billion each year.

Many tourists come to Canada to hunt, trap and fish, so that they can take advantage of the abundance of locations available for those activities. Those tourists make significant contributions to the Canadian economy.

Many Canadians also go to other regions of the country to engage in these activities. For more isolated communities, the economic benefits of these Canadian tourists are tremendous and enable some of them to prosper.

That was one of the goals of my Bill C-463, the Discover Your Canada Act, which I introduced in the House. This bill would have encouraged travel within Canada, perhaps convincing people who enjoy hunting, fishing and trapping to visit other places in Canada in order to practice their favourite activity. Unfortunately, as we all know, the Conservatives and the NDP voted against that initiative.

I would also like to point out that people who like to hunt, fish and trap are committed to preserving the environment. They, more than most, can speak to the effects of climate change on the environment. They work and live in nature. Accordingly, they are generally concerned about maintaining our environment. What is more, many hunting and fishing enthusiasts volunteer their time to preserve our environment.

I would recommend that the members opposite do more than just designate a national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day, and go even further by making a serious and tangible commitment to protect our environment.

Their environmental record so far has been condemned by almost every environmental group in Canada and abroad.

Canadians expect more. It is my hope that the government will propose concrete measures. Unfortunately, the many ideological cuts and changes made to the departments do not bode well.

Finally, as stated right in the bill, this national heritage day would not be a legal holiday or a non-judicial day, which should help avoid creating extra costs.

Nonetheless, I think we could consider this matter further in committee. For example, would the departments have to reprint their calendars in order to add this day? If so, how much might that cost?

I think there are a few technical details we need to iron out in committee.

Nevertheless, I support this bill because I believe that the contribution that hunting, trapping and fishing make to Canadian society is indisputable and deserves to be acknowledged.

I hope that my colleagues will agree and vote in favour of this bill so that we may refer it to committee and study its potential impact more closely.

● (1805)

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend both the member who just spoke and the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River. I should remind his constituents and all of those in the House that he was one of two members from the opposition party who supported the elimination of the long gun registry. It is good to see him stand in the House and give a speech on the very issues that he represents in terms of his riding. I appreciated hearing what he had to say.

I am also pleased that both of the previous speakers from the opposition will be supporting the bill. I can say without hesitation that is obviously appreciated on this side of the House and I know would be appreciated by the member who has moved this private member's bill.

It is great to speak today in support of Bill C-501, the national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day act. This legislation put forward by my colleague, the member for Northumberland—Quinte West, would designate the third Saturday of each September as Canada's national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day. It would also ensure that the cultural, economic and social impacts of these activities would be recognized across our country.

Put simply, Canadians are an outdoors people. Our identity as Canadians is characterized by our relationship with a dynamic and incomparable nature of our wilderness.

Many can remember the first time they went on a camping trip, built a fire and cooked their meal over a fire. Thousands of children come to Canada each year to go to summer camps to learn how to build a fire, set up a shelter in the rain, paddle a canoe, perfecting the J-stroke and appreciating nature and the outdoors in general. Many of those young people can cook a meal over a fire. I perhaps can do that on a barbecue, but certainly not over an open fire. It shows the diligence and importance of what this day means to not just those of us who are older in age but also those who are much younger.

Canada is known internationally for its beautiful national and provincial parks. This government recognizes that importance of maintaining vast, rich areas for the benefit of future generations. The National Parks Act clearly states:

The national parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment...the parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

This government has opened two new national parks and is in process of opening the Rouge national urban park, Canada's first urban national park. As a representative of an urban city riding, it means a lot for me to see that we will have a national urban park. It will be easily accessible to over 20% of Canada's population and will help forge connections between people of this great nation and the elements that make us truly Canadian.

As Canada approaches its 150th anniversary, we as Canadians are offered a rare opportunity to look back on our history and learn about how Canada became the country it is today. I cannot think of many activities that are as important to Canada as hunting, trapping and fishing.

The Hudson's Bay Company established trading posts across our country that facilitated the development of Canada's vast uncharted territories. Famous Canadian explorers and fur traders, like David Thompson who travelled more than 90,000 kilometres by horseback, canoe, dogsled and on his own two feet, charted Canada's untamed land and mapped more than one-sixth of the continent, paving the way for future explorers.

The famous voyageurs travelling in large wood canoes established many of Canada's first trading routes from Lake Winnipeg to the St. Lawrence River. These voyageurs were expected to paddle 14 hours per day and maintain a pace of 55 strokes per minute. Many of these

men died while paddling through dangerous rapids in frigid cold water.

A national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day would celebrate the continuity between Canada's heritage and contemporary activities. It would serve as a link between our ancestors and future generations. It would also recognize the economic impacts that all wilderness activities have on the Canadian economy.

In British Columbia, the gross domestic product for angling in 2003 was some \$711 million. The gross domestic product in British Columbia was \$116 million for hunting. In Alberta it was over \$102 million for hunting activities and many more millions of dollars in other trapping and related activities. In Ontario hunting alone generates over \$1.5 billion in economic activity annually.

• (1810)

The fur trade in Canada contributes over \$800 million to the Canadian gross domestic product. In terms of employment, the fur trade in Canada is composed of over 60,000 trappers, including 25,000 aboriginals with 5,000 representing fur farmers, manufacturers, dressers, retailers and many others. Some 3.2 million Canadians participate in recreational fishing and spend some \$7.5 billion annually on expenses related to the industry. Nationally, about one out of every ten Canadian adults is an active angler.

These figures show that Canadians remain an outdoors people and that recognizing and protecting Canada's natural heritage benefits Canada's economy, creates thousands of jobs across our country and shows how much this is a part of our common culture and identity.

Bill C-501 would also recognize the many community organizations that work together to ensure that Canadians have the opportunity to take part in outdoor activities such as hunting, trapping and fishing.

For example, the Police Association of Ontario, the not-for-profit conservation organization, Fishing Forever, and Canadian Tire have initiated a program called kids, cops and Canadian Tire fishing days. The Police Association of Ontario has invested over \$200,000 in this program, which takes thousands of kids fishing with police personnel for a full day. The program offers opportunities to create relationships between adults and children. It allows the police and the community to work together while investing in those children. They are part of our future. Children learn that police officers are interested in them, enjoy spending time with them, and also understand that policing is potentially a career choice for them.

We could also look at Ducks Unlimited, an organization that has been conserving wetlands in our country since 1938. Since its inception, the organization has secured six million acres of habitat through land purchases, management agreements and conservation elements. It has positively influenced 47 million acres of habitat through retention and restoration measures. It has completed 8,400 habitat projects. It has completed and represents 26,000 different project segments.

Private Members' Business

This piece of legislation would also help recognize just how important hunting, trapping and fishing are to all Canadians. For people who fish, it is much more than a hobby; it is a lifestyle that promotes relaxation and enjoyment. Fishing offers a gateway in freedom from everyday life or a hard week at work. Fishing can be enjoyed by people of all ages and all sizes. Hundreds of people across Canada look forward to the start of hunting season and the opportunity to take their children out for the first time or merely to share the experience of tracking an animal with friends and family.

In Canada, similar provincial recognition of hunting, trapping and fishing heritage exists in provinces such as Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and right here in Ontario. These provincial special days recognize the contributions that these activities make to our cultural, social and economic heritage. The recognition of this day would serve as an occasion to raise awareness about our heritage, our history, our culture and our identity. It would highlight the important role that hunting, trapping and fishing have played in the exploration and settlement of Canada and in our continued economic prosperity. It would also provide an opportunity for all Canadians to celebrate the long-standing traditions of hunting, trapping and fishing.

I am hopeful that all members of the House will support the bill. It is a simple and straightforward piece of legislation that recognizes the tremendous importance that these activities have for everyday Canadians from coast to coast. Our relationship with the outdoors has helped define our identity as Canadians and will continue to do so for generations to come.

I will conclude by stating that the member has certainly done his homework. He has worked hard with members of the opposition parties. At the time that private member's bills are put forward we never know how things are going to work out, whether they will become partisan or too political, or whether the partisan aspect will be eliminated and members will join together to support what is part of our Canadian identity. I believe the bill is one of those. It would be great to see, when we do come to third reading on the bill and we are standing in the House of Commons, that there is unanimous consent to move Bill C-501.

•(1815)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be speaking to Bill C-501, An Act respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day.

I have often mentioned that I hunt. I would like to preface my remarks by saying that during discussions about former Bill C-465, the former Canadian heritage committee said that fishing, hunting and trapping have been traditional subsistence methods for Canada's aboriginal people since time immemorial. That is important. Bill C-465 died on the order paper because the 2011 election was called early.

There are several aboriginal communities in my riding, and people are always talking about hunting and fishing. I will not discuss that for the moment because my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou can talk more about it when he gives his speech in the second hour of debate.

Our first nations were fishing long before the first white settlers arrived here, long before the 16th century, when explorers came to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It is one of our traditional activities.

According to the 2010 Survey of Recreational Fishing in Canada, almost 3.3 million adult anglers participated in a variety of recreational fishing activities in Canada. They caught over 193 million fish of all species and retained nearly 63 million.

In 2010, anglers invested \$5.8 billion in various kinds of gear in Canada. In Quebec alone, more than \$1.5 billion was spent on gear, boating equipment, camping equipment, vehicles, real estate and so on. That is significant.

I will use the rest of my time to talk about something that is especially important to me, and that is the increasing number of women who fish and hunt. More and more women in this country are fishing and hunting, and it is important to highlight that fact. I spoke with the member for Gatineau earlier and she told me that she still remembers when she caught her first walleye. The member for Halifax told me about how she used to hunt when she was younger and living in Kirkland Lake, which is close to where I live. A growing number of women are interested in the sport.

For example, in 2010, 245,000 fishing licences were sold in Quebec specifically to women. That is particularly interesting. As for hunting, in the past 10 years, 36,000 women have taken the introduction to hunting course in Quebec. More and more women in Quebec are heading into the forest and hunting.

Companies are even making products adapted for women. In the past, women had to buy men's gear in size small, when it was in stock. Some stores carried only a size large or bigger. It was very hard to dress for hunting. These days, many products are adapted for women and their size. This market has really opened up and developed. Canadian companies continue to develop such products for women because nearly 25% of women do hunt.

I read another article about women who hunt, specifically in my riding of Abitibi—Témiscamingue. The article said that women often make very good hunters because they tend to learn from their mistakes in order to get better. Perhaps male hunters are less likely to admit their mistakes, and that is why they improve more slowly. Women, however, really want to improve. They are also more patient, which is a valuable attribute in hunting. This is why women often become excellent hunters.

Some of my colleagues may not know this, but two licences are needed to kill a moose in Quebec. One person can shoot the moose and a second person must devote their licence to that moose. According to that article, women are no longer present just to supply a second licence. They are really playing an active role in the forest. It seems that hunting camps are also much bigger and offer more amenities, which means that hunting is becoming more of a family activity, and camps are no longer rustic places for men to gather among friends.

•(1820)

[English]

I would also like to share something I found really funny. When I was doing my research on hunting and fishing, I found a Facebook page. It is called “Women Hunt Too”. Over 95,000 people have “liked” this page. It is really impressive.

[Translation]

I want to point out that there are women of all ages who hunt. I recently saw a photo that one of my friends posted on Facebook of herself with her four-year-old daughter. There they were, two girls going hunting. I think it is wonderful to see this passion being passed on to young girls.

[English]

I would also like to add that hunting for women is not just for young women. It is also for older women. I read an article about a woman from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, named Laura Wood. This 95-year-old woman bagged a moose with one shot. It is really impressive. She said that she has hunted since she was 16 years old. She hunted rabbit and deer.

These examples of women who have hunted for a long time bring younger women to hunting. They make hunting available not just for men but for women of every age.

•(1825)

[Translation]

I would also like to talk about an initiative of the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs. In 1999, the federation created the Fauniquement femme program, through which it offers annual workshops to introduce women to fishing and hunting. The program is geared towards women.

I found another example from Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Whitetail Outfitters does the exact same thing and organizes hunting trips for women and girls. I think that is great. The markets are increasingly adapting to women. Although hunting is a traditionally male activity, that boundary is breaking down. This is something to be celebrated.

As I have already said, many products have been adapted for women, even firearms. For example, stocks are smaller and adjustable. Hunting has become an economic sector in Canada, and this sector includes everyone—not just men. That is why I think this day is worthwhile.

I spoke a lot about the role of women. I spoke with the hon. member for Gatineau, who was telling me that she remembers the first time she caught a pickerel. I had to tell her that I do not remember catching my first fish because I was too young. It is the same thing for hunting. I barely remember. My father tells me wonderful stories. When I was young, he made me a wooden rifle and he took me with him to hunt partridge. I was just barely three years old. The more we introduce people to hunting, the more they will be able to understand and share our passion, and the more meaningful this national day will become.

I would like to specify that one of the most important things for me is taking the time to introduce young women to hunting. This

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should not remain a male-dominated activity. More and more people are open-minded about it and more and more fathers do not have any problem taking their wives or daughters hunting with them. They are proud to show off the pictures of the moose that their wife shot with a rifle or bow.

I was pleased to speak about this bill. I hope that many women will continue to discover hunting. I hope that people will continue to speak to me about their experiences and I hope that I will continue to see hunting pictures.

I also hope that many people will continue to come to my riding and contribute to its economy. I hope that this generation of hunters will endure and that, when I am 95 years old, I will be able to talk to them about a moose that I killed. I would be happy to do so.

I therefore encourage members to support this bill.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

•(1830)

[English]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are cutting off northwestern Ontario. Residents in my riding are being ignored by a federal government that is supposed to represent them.

Thunder Bay—Superior North is a vibrant region with a wealth of natural resources, and it has contributed a great deal to Canada's economic development for several hundred years, but now it gets little in return from the government. Unemployment is still a pressing concern for northwestern Ontario, and the government has failed to turn it around.

Across Canada we have seen the number of temporary foreign workers double in just one year under the Conservatives. Almost half the supposed new jobs the government has claimed to have created have not gone to Canadians. Workers in my riding are worried that many new jobs in the Ring of Fire will go to temporary foreign workers.

Like in many regions, tourism is a vital component of the economy of northwestern Ontario and Canada, but the industry is in crisis. According to the World Tourism Organization, in the last 10 years, international arrivals in Canada plunged from over 20 million to just 16 million last year. This past year, the government cut the Canadian Tourism Commission budget by 20% to \$58 million, half what it was a decade ago. This has impacted not just Thunder Bay—Superior North; it is a disaster in the making for the entire Canadian economy and our soaring balance of trade deficit.

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What is more, the service cuts in my riding are unprecedented. I am flooded with letters and emails from my constituents about their inability to access important government services. The Conservatives have closed the Thunder Bay Citizenship and Immigration office totally. They have cut 25 positions at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada in Thunder Bay, making things even more difficult for unemployment insurance recipients, who had trouble before.

In February, the Thunder Bay Veterans Affairs office is scheduled to close. Ten employees in the office will lose their jobs, and over 2,000 veterans, many of them young veterans, and their families will now have to drive over six hours to Manitoba for dedicated service. Veterans have been told to just call a 1-800 number or go online for support with the submission of complex benefits forms concerning their serious physical and mental health issues.

The government has insisted that veterans in my riding will be able to just go to the local Service Canada centre for support, but over 20 jobs have been axed there, with constituents already unable to get the assistance they need.

The Conservatives have long promised action on first nations education, yet we have seen no new funding commitments at all, despite the fact that aboriginal students are funded at only half the level of other students in Ontario.

We in northern Ontario have been calling for years for FedNor to be an independent, stand-alone regional economic development agency, as in eastern and western Canada. Former NDP member Tony Martin introduced legislation that would have made FedNor an independent economic development agency governed by a regional board of directors, and I have raised this issue many times in this House.

FedNor needs to be free from political interference. We already know about FedNor project funding that was funnelled through the constituency office of the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, but the government hid this from the Auditor General when an investigation was launched.

After reviewing this record, I ask again: Where is the concrete plan for supporting service provision and economic development in northwestern Ontario?

Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to highlight the commitment and efforts by our government to assist in northwestern Ontario's long-term prosperity and economic success, and in particular, how the fine work done by FedNor continues to play an integral role supporting organizations all over northern Ontario in this regard.

Our government has demonstrated its commitment to northern Ontario's economic development from the outset. Since April 2006, our government, through FedNor, has invested more than \$360 million toward more than 1,600 projects in the region. These initiatives are squarely focused upon community economic development, business growth, competitiveness, and innovation that creates jobs and that ensures sustainable growth in our communities and long-term prosperity right across northern Ontario.

Evidence that our investments are delivering for northwestern Ontario residents can be seen, felt, and heard throughout the region. The member for Thunder Bay—Superior North needs to look no further than his own riding and the beautiful city of Thunder Bay to see for himself our government's commitment to bettering the quality of life of Canadians in northern Ontario.

Since 2006, our investments in the city have totalled more than \$55 million in support of over 170 projects.

One of the many sectors that have benefited from our investments is the growing health sciences and biotechnology cluster, with the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute at its core. This includes FedNor's \$4 million investment toward Thunder Bay's cyclotron, a key element of our government's commitment to science, innovation, and job creation in the region. This significant investment complements earlier contributions to this initiative and will help the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute continue its important research and commercialization work.

Another great example that speaks to the health and vitality of Thunder Bay's economy is the waterfront development at Prince Arthur's Landing, which has been a catalyst for economic development in the region. The waterfront's new infrastructure helped attract more than 170,000 people to various events and activities last year, as well as private-sector investment. This development created jobs in the community, contributing to the growth and long-term prosperity of the region and improving the quality of life of everyone in the municipality and in the surrounding area.

Furthermore, as this development continues, we expect to see more clustering activity at the waterfront in the downtown core, which would result in additional business development and job creation.

FedNor was also instrumental in helping to deliver two significant national stimulus initiatives of benefit to northwestern Ontario through Canada's economic action plan.

As a result of the community adjustment fund, or the community infrastructure improvement fund, many municipalities across the northwest were able to upgrade existing public infrastructure or to undertake creative and constructive projects, leading to economic development, diversification, job creation, and improved access for users.

Our government is also committed to ensuring that Canada's vast mineral wealth is developed responsibly. Northern Ontario's Ring of Fire is a regional example of this commitment to responsible resource development.

The Ring of Fire could create over 5,000 direct and indirect jobs in northern Ontario alone, plus significant spinoff benefits throughout the province and elsewhere in Canada.

Through FedNor, our government remains committed to ensuring that businesses receive the practical tools they need, that resource development is done in a responsible manner, and that communities will continue to thrive in northern Ontario.

• (1835)

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, northwestern Ontario deserves the same treatment as the rest of Canada. We need real action on unemployment, not more temporary foreign workers. We need proper services, not cut after cut to Service Canada and other government offices. Axing government jobs and slashing services for residents is unconscionable.

FedNor does not work well enough for northern Ontario. It must be protected from politicians who seek to use it to make electoral gains. It needs to be reformed to be independent and transparent and to be promoting the northern economy adequately.

All these problems, including FedNor, first nations' education, unemployment, and government service cuts have been worsening for years under the Conservatives. It is part of a pattern of neglecting the north. It is time for a change.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, FedNor will continue to focus on community economic development, business growth, competitiveness, and innovation that creates jobs and long-term prosperity across northern Ontario.

We will continue to ensure that communities and businesses in northern Ontario have the tools they need to have a strong, diversified economy.

Our government is working with all levels of government, with first nations, and with stakeholders to ensure that we maximize the economic opportunities and long-term sustainability of northern Ontario.

• (1840)

[Translation]

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to return to a question I raised on October 22 concerning a major survey of 4,000 federal government scientists, researchers and engineers.

The survey conducted by Environics indicates the extent of the climate of fear that reigns in the federal public service concerning relations between scientists and the media. The study, entitled *The Big Chill*, shows the scale and impact of muzzling and political interference among federal scientists since the Conservative government tightened communications rules.

One of the main findings of the survey is that 86% of federal government scientists feel they would face censure or retaliation if they talked. One in four scientists had been directly asked to exclude or alter information for reasons that have nothing to do with science. As well, 37% of scientists indicated that they had been prevented from responding to questions from the public and the media in the past five years.

Half of federal scientists say they can give examples of political interference in their scientific work that jeopardizes the health and

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safety of Canadians and environmental sustainability. Finally, 71% of federal scientists believe that political interference has compromised Canada's ability to develop policy, law and programs based on scientific evidence.

As we can see, this is very worrisome. Scientists have told us that often, as a result of the Conservative government's political interference in communications about science, the public is misled and Canadians' health and safety are jeopardized. This is both shocking and disturbing.

The Conservative government wants to muzzle scientists because their comments contradict the government's ideology. I believe that we should listen to the scientists. The report quotes several federal scientists.

I would like to quote some of the scientists. One person who was interviewed had this to say:

I feel that climate change scientists and oil sands scientists are the most muzzled groups, restricted by the current government in what information they can share. And if the current government does not like the results of their research, the solution is to reduce staffing.

Another scientist said:

Often there is pressure to make decisions based on pressure from industry rather than science-based/health issues.

I have a number of other quotes but, unfortunately, I do not have time to read them all. However, we know that the situation is so troubling that the Information Commissioner, Suzanne Legault, is conducting an investigation into these policies, which have been widely criticized for muzzling scientists, suppressing information that criticizes or contradicts government policy and delaying the timely communication of vital information to the media and the public.

My question for the Minister of State for Science and Technology is simple. When will he decide to stand up for science and the safety of Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to respond to comments made earlier by the hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles regarding the freedom of speech for federal scientists.

The government is extremely proud of the world class work that our scientists and researchers do. They help us achieve and improve quality of life for Canadians through improvements to public health, ensuring safety of foods and products, building strong and vibrant economies all across the nation and ensuring a clean and healthy environment for future generations. The government recognizes its obligation to inform the public of their activities, and that is why the government is committed to ensuring that federally funded scientific research is shared widely with Canadians.

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Each year, government departments provide thousands of interviews to the media. Similarly, federal scientists publish thousands of peer-reviewed articles, research reports and data sets. Their findings are shared at scientific conferences, at home and abroad, and made widely available to other scientists, to Canadians and to scientific communities around the world.

Last year, for example, Environment Canada participated in more than 1,300 media interviews, and its scientists published more than 700 scientific articles. The same year, researchers at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada produced more than 1,100 peer-reviewed scientific publications and more than 700 non-peer-reviewed articles. Information is being shared. The numbers speak for themselves.

All federal public servants follow the same processes established under the Government of Canada communications policy, to cultivate proactive relations with the media and to promptly address their inquiries.

Beyond supporting the dissemination of research findings through the media and scholarly channels, the government has launched initiatives to make federally funded scientific research and data more widely available to Canadians.

That is why, through our action plan on open government, we have committed to engage Canadians through open information, open data and open dialogue.

In March 2011, the government launched the open data portal, which can be found at www.data.gc.ca, a one-stop shop for federal government data that is easily accessible to citizens, researchers, voluntary organizations and private sector businesses. Federal scientific knowledge is also shared with the public through portals such as the science.gc.ca website.

In October of this year, our federal granting councils began public consultations on a new open access policy. This work is exploring ways to make federally funded research more widely available to the public and to scientific communities.

Canada has an enviable reputation for its scientific and technological contributions and a recent history of very strong investments to foster research and development. We are ranked number one among G7 countries for higher education expenditures on research and development as a percentage of GDP, and recent reports show that Canadian S and T is healthy, growing and recognized around the world for its excellence.

Science, technology and innovation comprise the foundation of Canada's high standard of living, and create jobs, growth and long-term prosperity. Federal scientists and researchers contribute to these endeavours every day, and our government is committed to communicating the results of their ingenuity, dedication and hard work to Canadians.

The government is committed to build on these successes and to further strengthen Canadian science in an open and transparent manner.

As mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, the government will continue making targeted investments in science and innovation in order to position Canada as a leader in the knowledge economy.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu: Mr. Speaker, his answer made so little sense that I have to wonder if he even listened to my speech.

Although Canadian scientists are distinguishing themselves, it is certainly not thanks to the Conservative government, which has an abysmal record when it comes to basic science and scientific integrity.

I would remind the House that the NDP has called on the government repeatedly, particularly on opposition days, to stop muzzling Canadian scientists.

We are raising the issue again this fall with a plan to put an end to the Conservative practice of muzzling federal scientists. Our motion, moved by my colleague from Burnaby—Douglas, calls on all federal organizations to implement communications policies that ensure that scientists can speak freely to journalists and share their research with Canadians.

The NDP will continue to defend scientists' freedom of speech and the assurance of a balance between basic and applied research. When will the government take off its blinders on this issue?

[*English*]

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, in listening to the question, I wonder if the NDP will begin to embrace the science around the safety of pipelines instead of travelling around the world lobbying against Canada's interests when it relates to pipelines.

The government understands the importance of open and transparent communication and federally funded science. We are extremely proud of the work that our scientists and researchers do.

I am not sure if the member heard it the first time or the second time I said it, but like all public servants, Canada's federal scientists are guided by the Government of Canada's communications policy.

Canada's federal researchers share their work very broadly through a variety of means. They produce thousands of publications each year. Their findings are presented at conferences at home and abroad and they share their work directly with Canadians through interviews with the media.

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As a government, we understand that the communication of science is extremely important. Beyond supporting the dissemination of research findings through the media and scholarly channels, the government has launched initiatives to make federally funded scientific research and data more widely available to Canadians.

● (1850)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:50 p.m.)

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