



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

---

VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 048 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

---

OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, February 13, 2014**

---

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 13, 2014

The House met at 10 a.m.

---

*Prayers*

---

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C), 2013-14

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (C) for the financial year ending March 31, 2014, was presented by the Leader of the government in the House of Commons for the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

\* \* \*

•(1005)

[*English*]

### PETITIONS

#### CRIMINAL CODE

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have with me this morning a petition with 3,000 signatures from all over our great nation, calling on Parliament to decriminalize the selling of sexual services by victims, and to criminalize the purchase of the sexual services by the predators who use them.

I respectfully submit this from petitioners all across Canada.

#### SHARK FINNING

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from thousands of Canadians who are calling on the Government of Canada to immediately impose a ban on the importation of shark fins to Canada.

#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present a petition on behalf of the Native Women's Association of Canada, which urges the government to hold a national public inquiry into the ongoing tragedy of the drastically disproportionate numbers of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada. The petition also calls on the government to involve those most affected by this tragic issue, aboriginal women, in the design and implementation of this inquiry.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognize that the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, Michèle Audette, is on the Hill today, with Elder Annie St. Georges and loved ones of the victims, to speak about their online petition which also calls for a national inquiry. It has more than 17,000 signatures.

#### CANADA POST

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in the House to present petitions from a few hundred Canadians who are upset with Canada Post's decision to axe good jobs and home delivery, and the cost of stamps. They are asking the government to reverse these cuts to services that were recently announced and to look at ways to modernize operations instead.

[*Translation*]

#### VIA RAIL

**Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting part of a petition signed by 24,000 people in New Brunswick who, like those in northern Mauricie, are struggling with cuts to rail service.

#### GATINEAU PARK

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting two petitions signed by hundreds of people. They are calling on the government to make regulations to protect Gatineau Park.

Gatineau Park is home to about 90 endangered plant and 50 endangered animal species. The park is a gem, and it would be in the government's interest to listen to what Canadians and Quebeckers are saying. The government should make regulations to protect this magnificent park.

[*English*]

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition on CCSVI.

It has been four years since Canadians began travelling overseas for treatment for CCSVI. Canadians with MS are wondering how the government is going to judge the radically different CCSVI data from the east and west of Canada, and when there might be an update on the government's MS registry, which was announced in March 2011.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners call upon the Minister of Health to undertake phase III clinical trials on an urgent basis in the multiple centres across Canada, and to require follow-up care.

[*Translation*]

## VIA RAIL

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by more than 100 people. It can be added to the others that have been signed by hundreds of people, urging the Canadian government to take any measure necessary to preserve the rail line between Montreal and Halifax.

We know that the segment between Bathurst and Miramichi is currently for sale and may close down, which could compromise rail transportation in eastern Quebec and the Maritimes. The more than 100 names on this petition are an addition to the hundreds of signatures that the House has already received. We are asking the Canadian government to take action.

• (1010)

[*English*]

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition is on behalf of my constituents with respect to hydraulic fracturing.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to ban the practice of hydraulic fracturing. They are speaking to the process itself and what is required for it to take place.

The petitioners point out that several Canadian provinces, as well as several U.S. states, have halted the practice. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to do the same.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is also from my constituents, who are concerned about mining. The petitioners want the creation of a legislative ombudsman mechanism for responsible mining.

The petitioners are saying that there is not enough oversight in terms of mining practices. Therefore, they call upon the Government of Canada to create a legislative ombudsman mechanism for responsible mining.

## PARKS CANADA

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The first petition is from people who are worried about the cutbacks in operation hours for the Rideau Canal and Trent-Severn Waterway. The petitioners would like the hours to be restored to the service level of 2011.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from constituents who call upon the government to provide long-term, predictable, and non-partisan funding for public transit.

The petitioners believe that Canadians deserve fast, reliable, and affordable public transit, and that there is an estimated \$32-billion investment gap in public transit infrastructure needs across Canada.

## ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition on behalf of the Native Women's Association of Canada. It is a petition that has been signed by tens of thousands of Canadians.

The petitioners are asking the Conservative government to call a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. It is time to do that for the families of those who are grieving for their communities. It is time for justice.

I want to acknowledge the hard work in moving this petition by people like Elder Annie St. Georges; family members of women who are missing, such as Lorna Martin, Sue Martin, and Gail Nepinak; as well as the team at the Native Women's Association of Canada, president Michèle Audette; Irene Goodwin, Teresa Edwards, Daryle Gardipy, Jackie Brennan, Amanda Mitchell, Rebekah Elkerton, and Sarah MacLean. I thank them very much.

## UKRAINE

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition today that expresses the concerns of people from across Canada who are urging Parliament to take action to help facilitate a peaceful resolution to the current unrest and government-sanctioned, anti-democratic crackdown against Ukrainians.

In cities across Ukraine, Euromania protesters are demanding a democratic Ukraine that must allow for opposition voices to exist and be heard. The current treatment of protesters and human rights violations must be admonished.

This petition asks Parliament to stand in solidarity with Ukrainians and to impose targeted sanctions against individuals who are responsible for the ongoing violations in Ukraine.

[*Translation*]

## GATINEAU PARK

**Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I too have the pleasure to present a petition signed by residents of the national capital region who are calling on the government to pass legislation that would give Gatineau Park full protection.

## MANAWAN SCHOOL

**Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by 688 people.

We, the undersigned, are calling on the Government of Canada to fulfill the commitment it made by adopting Motion No. 571 on September 16, 2010, and address the untenable situation in Manawan. These children are looking forward to going to a building that can actually be called a school.

*The Budget*

[English]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

●(1015)

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from February 12 consideration of the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to finish the speech I started yesterday on the federal government's 2014 budget.

I will start with a quick summary of what I talked about yesterday. I provided an overview of Canada's economic situation. The government painted a picture of it, but the real picture is not as pretty as the government would have us believe. The last four budgets have been about austerity and cuts, and this budget is no different. The government is not trying to hide that fact. What it is trying to hide is the fact that its cuts are bad for economic growth and job creation.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer pointed that out in his latest reports to the House. The Parliamentary Budget Officer also pointed out that economic growth, or Canada's current economic performance, is about 1.6% lower than it would have been without the cuts. That might not seem like a big difference, but 1.6% amounts to tens of billions of dollars that did not contribute to economic growth and that were lost in terms of potential economic prosperity.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer is not the only one to have pointed that out. In its latest report, published in January, the International Monetary Fund clearly indicated that the Canadian government's austerity measures, including those in the previous budget, resulted in economic growth that was 10% to 15% lower than it would have been without those measures.

We can tackle growth and job creation if we delay balancing the budget until 2016 or 2017. Canada is still in a strong position compared to our partners, even though our situation is not as rosy as the government says. Still, when it comes to balancing the budget, the debt-to-GDP ratio, we can wait. That is what the International Monetary Fund said.

The government still says that we are leading the G7 on economic growth, but that is no longer true. The growth outlook puts us third, and we are sliding slowly because of the Conservative government's

inaction. The OECD says the same thing: we are now in the middle of the pack, and other countries that have come up with more ways to promote growth and job creation are edging past Canada.

While our economic growth is stagnating, the federal government is turning a blind eye. The goal of this budget, the not-so-secret objective, is to achieve a balanced budget in 2015. The Conservative government's open secret is that it wants to have good news to spread in 2015, just in time for the election.

That is not the best way to run a country or to demonstrate good governance. That is not what it means to work for the common good of Canadians, but it is what the Conservative government has decided to do.

I would like to mention one final point to remind hon. members of what I was saying yesterday. I was shocked to hear one particular statement from the Minister of Finance during his budget speech, and I will repeat it again. The Minister of Finance said:

...our government remains committed to balancing the budget in 2015, but I must be clear. We did not do this on the backs of ordinary Canadians or Canadians in need...

How can the Minister of Finance say such a thing? I am well aware that, not only in my riding, but in my part of the country, massive cuts have been made to employment insurance. If the minister does not see that employment insurance provides assistance to people in need, then he is really out of touch. There have been significant cuts in other areas, too, including VIA Rail, Canada Post, Service Canada, veterans' services and food inspection, as well as in science and technology, which help Canada remain competitive in the world, both economically and in terms of technological advances. It is absolutely absurd for the minister to claim that the cuts made over the past four years have had no effect on ordinary Canadians or Canadians in need; on the contrary.

I just mentioned food inspection. There are a handful of measures in the budget that we actually agree with. Of course, as the government members rise to express their support for this budget, they will choose certain measures here and there, mentioning a given fantastic measure on a given page. They will probably choose measures that we agree with.

●(1020)

The main job creation and economic growth measures are not in the overall budget.

To come back to food inspection, we applaud one measure in particular, and that is adding inspectors to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. However, this measure speaks to the government's denial of certain situations.

It is good to add 200 inspectors and the equivalent of roughly \$350 million or \$360 million to improve food safety. The problem is that for two years, the government has been denying that its massive budget cuts have had any impact on food inspection. It is finally opening its eyes and including a measure in this budget to add 200 inspectors. What did they do for the 300 inspectors who have been laid off in the past two years? They did not say in their budget.

*The Budget*

At the end of the day, we still have a lot of work to do to make this government realize that it has to have a direct hand in filling the gaps left by its previous budgets. It has to stop waiting two years to consider each major problem pointed out by the opposition.

I am also in favour of the measure to provide rural homes with high-speed broadband Internet access. I fully support that measure. Why did the government eliminate most of the Internet access programs that provided funding for using the Internet at rural libraries?

First, the government takes away an essential service from the rural regions for two or three years, and then it wakes up to the fact that the rural regions are suffering from this lack of access and decides to give them something. I look forward to seeing concrete results. Having 280,000 people connected to the Internet may seem like a lot, but countrywide it is not so much per riding.

We can get behind many measures that will be beneficial. The first budget implementation bill will probably be introduced in April. That is when we will be able to discuss it and see how the government would like to begin applying these measures.

Often the devil is in the details. If these measures are acceptable, we will support them in the Standing Committee on Finance. The government knows full well that the vote on budget implementation bills, like the vote on the budget itself, includes all the measures.

Although we can agree on some of the smaller measures that will be significant to the community, most of the major job creation and economic growth measures are just not in the budget.

I would like to close by talking about the government's approach to its different programs.

Take the job grant for example. Trying to connect the unemployed with jobs based on their skills is a noble objective. We agree. However, we are not talking about objectives; we are talking about how it is done. In terms of the job grant, which is a provincially run training program, the Minister of Finance said that it is the federal government's money and that it is going to spend that money as it pleases. Just imagine the resulting problems with implementing those key measures.

Once again, we agree that it is a good objective, but confronting the provinces in their own area of jurisdiction creates problems in implementing those measures. If those measures are needed now, the government members will agree with us that the provinces must be on board and consulted to ensure that the measures can be implemented as soon as possible.

Instead, what is the government doing? It is picking quarrels with the provinces. We saw all the provinces react right away. Let me say that they were also not happy with the Minister of Finance's comments after the budget was tabled. They did not understand.

This is not the only issue on which the Conservatives have failed to respect jurisdictions and to co-operate with the provinces. There is also the single securities commission. They have renamed it but it is still a move toward a centralized securities regulator. However, that too is an area of provincial jurisdiction, and the Supreme Court said so.

● (1025)

The federal government's role is to monitor the whole system, even though the provinces apply the rules. The provinces understand the importance of creating a synergy amongst themselves in order to ensure that we have a strong financial system that protects us, while creating as few obstacles as possible for investors.

The provinces work together. With a passport system, for example, an issue that creates a legal precedent can be recognized as case law in all provinces, and the accreditation of someone working in the field can be recognized across Canada, even if he or she works in one particular province. Co-operation among the provinces and the passport system have eliminated many obstacles.

Just imagine how quickly we could set up a system that would achieve the government's objectives, if it worked with the provinces that set up this system. Unfortunately, the government prefers its own system and is now looking for the provinces' co-operation. To date, only two provinces are working with the federal government while eight have declined.

How much time will we have to spend trying to convince some provinces that are not really willing to adopt this system, when we could have a system that would achieve the same objectives much more quickly if the government accepted the provinces' initiative?

That is not all. This budget would also eliminate the immigrant investor program. We can and should discuss the effectiveness of the program. However, in the end, the government made the decision without the provinces' agreement. Just yesterday, the Premier of Saskatchewan, Brad Wall, rejected the government's one-way initiative.

The government has no idea where it is currently headed or how a federation works. To achieve its objectives as quickly as possible, a federal government has to come to an agreement with the provincial governments and work with them. Instead, this government is being confrontational and as a result it will take much longer to develop the objectives and elements of good governance, even when that is possible.

In that sense, this budget clearly does not achieve the objective that a government should set for itself, that is, to focus government resources on economic growth and job creation.

They will talk it over and tell themselves that it can be done, but believe me, this budget will not meet any of its objectives. The only objective in this budget is the arbitrary objective to balance the budget in 2015, so that the Conservatives can hand out goodies and try to win over the Canadian public with their claims of good governance.

I guarantee you that the public will not be fooled and that at the next election in 2015 it will hear all about the lack of good governance.

*The Budget*

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one easily comes to an understanding that the budget is status quo, a holdback with no real vision for Canada. We get the sense that at the end of the day the Conservatives are putting political priorities ahead of what is in the best interests of Canadians.

It is interesting that the highlight of the budget seems to be that we will balance the budget. When the Conservatives took office they had a very healthy surplus, billions of dollars in surplus, compliments of former prime minister Paul Martin. They converted that healthy surplus, even before the recession began, into a deficit. The finances were in good order when the Conservatives took over.

One of the most significant economic factors is international trade. Again, the Conservatives inherited a good, solid, healthy, multi-billion-dollar surplus. That means thousands of jobs for Canadians. They have converted that into an unhealthy billion-dollar-plus trade deficit. That means the loss of thousands of jobs.

Would the member not agree that one of the ways to best achieve a balanced budget, and even go into a surplus, is to encourage growth in Canada? We can do that by increasing the trade surplus, or striving to get a trade surplus and so forth. Would the member provide comment on that?

• (1030)

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for his question.

Economic growth and job creation are indeed connected to good governance and the policies that go along with that. I completely agree with the member. The Conservatives brag about balancing the budget, but they are the ones who created a deficit before the recession even hit, as a result of the measures they implemented, measures that most economists called ineffective.

As for the Conservatives' management, since they came to power they have increased our national debt by \$123 billion. Now they are bragging about balancing the budget eight or nine years after they came to power. Aside from their first two budgets, the one after the 2006 election, when they took over from another administration, and the one in 2007, when the surplus had already shrunk by about half, the last time that a Conservative government balanced the budget was in 1912 under Robert Borden.

The government needs to do some soul-searching about how it has managed the economy and about its priorities. It refuses to do so, which we think is shameful. The economy goes hand in hand with balance, but the Conservatives only seem to talk about the fiscal aspect.

The economy is complex. Taxes are an important element, but they are not the only things that help ensure a healthy economy. We need to adopt policies that will address issues such as income inequality, energy and energy prices. Those policies must cover everything that makes Canada attractive to investors. The Conservatives are not doing that. They are blind to the complexities of the economy and the more sophisticated measures that are required to achieve that prosperity.

[English]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening carefully to the hon. member's speech and to the question from the Liberal member, and I am a little perplexed, because back in 2009, when the global economic recession hit, it was actually with the urging and the support of both the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party that our government put about \$55 billion into stimulus funding to help spur and support the economy at that very difficult time. It is certainly a huge accomplishment that the world's best Minister of Finance has worked diligently to try to overcome that \$55-billion deficit.

The hon. member speaks in very general terms about things he would like to see done. Can he tell this House this: When was the last time, if ever, the New Democratic Party actually costed all of its wishes and recommendations that its members speak to so eloquently in this House? Have the New Democrats ever put a number to what that would cost Canadian taxpayers?

It is one thing to stand on the other side and say that they do not like this and they do not like that and that they think something is a better idea. However, the reality is that they have to have money to pay for the things they are saying, and the New Democrats have never put a number on their wish list.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I have a feeling that the member did not really follow what happened before the budget was tabled.

We made four specific requests. We asked that the eco-energy program be reinstated. It had three objectives: to fight climate change, to assist taxpayers and to provide jobs. The eco-energy program provided 15,000 people with work. That was coupled with our other requests, which were to establish a tax credit for hiring young people and an additional tax credit to help small and medium-sized businesses increase hiring. Our fourth request was to bring back veterans' offices.

Our requests would cost approximately \$500 million. We were not asking the government to spend an additional \$500 million. We were simply saying that the budget is a question of choice. The government's initiatives are less effective. Instead, the government should take the ideas we proposed so that more jobs would be created. Unfortunately, the Minister of Finance did not listen.

I would like to remind the hon. member that the Minister of Finance himself reports on the state of public finances in the federal government and the provinces. Since 1982, or since 1987, depending on where my colleague wants to start, in all the provinces, the NDP governments have been the best and most effective at balancing the budget.

Yes, the NDP understands the importance of economic growth and a balanced budget, particularly in an economic cycle. The Conservative government, however, does not score well in this particular subject, at the federal level in particular.

*The Budget*

•(1035)

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques for his very enlightening speech that covered important details about this budget and the government's failure to take action.

My Conservative colleague's question referred to the government's highly Manichaean, almost cartoonish approach to extolling the qualities of the greatest minister in all of the universes, known and unknown. However, the government is suffering from wilful blindness. My colleague said that in his speech, and we saw it at the Standing Committee on Finance, especially when the acting Parliamentary Budget Officer appeared. Despite the Conservatives' desperate attempts to show that all of the jobs created since the end of the recession were the direct result of government measures, analysts have never been able to show the government conclusive evidence that it was all connected.

The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer also pointed out that austerity slowed our economy down and resulted in both job losses and loss of economic growth.

I would like my colleague to give us an idea of what this has cost Canadians.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques has one minute to answer.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I will answer quickly, even though the question does require a little more time.

There are two parts to my answer. First of all, when we talk about the choices this government makes in terms of its policies, there is something called the multiplier effect. Each of the various measures has a different effect on economic growth. For instance, infrastructure measures will help create \$1.50 in economic growth for every \$1 invested. Measures meant to help the most vulnerable families—whether in the area of employment insurance or social housing—will create about \$1.45 for every \$1 invested. The reason is that those people spend money and therefore contribute to economic growth. Measures like reducing corporate taxes, as the Conservatives did, can have a positive impact, and they hope it will, but in the end, it has been proven that in the short and medium term, this yields only 30¢ of economic growth for every \$1 lost in revenue. In that sense, the government is clearly not going in the right direction.

As for the issue of policies, the former parliamentary budget officer clearly demonstrated that austerity policies usually mean that fewer jobs can be created—sometimes thousands fewer and sometimes more than 10,000 fewer.

[*English*]

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first I wish to indicate that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Nipissing—Timiskaming.

When I was a university student, one of the first words my professor in the economics department said was, “You cannot spend more than what you have taken in”. Economics is a very simple science. We have to balance what we take in with what we spend.

A couple of days ago, the finance minister indicated very clearly that we need to achieve a balanced budget and that it will be done through job creation, economic growth, and ensuring the long-term prosperity of Canada.

Let me also explain to members opposite, if they do not understand, microeconomics and macroeconomics. Microeconomics has to do with one's basic household budget. We cannot spend more than we earn. Businesses also cannot spend more than they earn, or else they go bankrupt.

I have served in public companies in the past. I have had to stand in front of my shareholders every year to explain the company's strategy to achieve a balanced budget and to put it in a profitable position year after year.

I think the minister has done an excellent job outlining to the nation, to corporate Canada, if we treat Canada as a corporation, in a macroeconomic sense, that we cannot spend more than we take in. I think that is the basic lesson we have to learn about the economy of this country.

In this balanced budget, there is another side that is not being explained at all by the members of the opposition. I do not think they quite understand the concept of assets and liabilities.

The country's assets are our human resources, our natural resources, and our ability to educate our youth so that they can carry on building this nation. Where we cannot internally generate these assets or wealth, we could have policies to bring in immigrants, entrepreneur immigrants, or we could set the most favourable, business-friendly conditions in Canada to attract those types of assets to Canada.

On the liability side, we have to spend in a measured way so that we do not overspend what we have. We can argue that, yes, we can sometimes, in a stimulus way, spend a little bit more, as we did in 2008-09, by borrowing from the future. However, at the end of the day, we have to balance the budget. That is absolutely key to the long-term survival of the economy of this country.

Let me drill down a bit to help my friends across the way understand what is needed to maintain these sustainable economic conditions.

We need to create a business-friendly environment. We need to have safe families. We need to have safe communities. We need to have healthy families. We need to educate our youth from day one until the point that they can contribute to our society. We need to have a stable government. We cannot be changing a government every year or every two years, as we have witnessed in Italy or in Thailand, where in the last 50 years, they have had 30 changes of government. That is not a stable economy for a business-friendly environment.

We need to attract direct foreign investment. Some tools the government has to attract direct foreign investment are low taxes and an investment-friendly environment so that foreign business will say that Canada is a great place to do business, and they will come here and invest.



*The Budget*

Let me share something about Canada's tax system. Since the Conservatives have been in power, we have reduced taxes 160 times, from consumption taxes to corporate taxes and just about every kind of tax we can think of.

● (1040)

Our general federal corporate tax in Canada is 15%. This is probably one of the lowest of the G7 and, as a matter of fact, it is the lowest in the world. I used to do business in Hong Kong, where the corporate tax rate is 16.5%. We are even lower than Hong Kong.

Bloomberg and the IMF have agreed that Canada is now one of the best places to do business. We provide our labour, our families, with a very generous universal health system. We have one of the best education systems, which attracts hundreds of thousands of international students, also benefiting our economy.

As far as stimulus to our small and medium-size enterprises, which are the backbone of our economy, our tax rate for businesses under \$500,000 is about 11%. I cannot think of a country with that generous a tax regime.

Something that we talk about a lot, and the member opposite alluded to, is the government spends \$1 and it generates a 50% more multiplier effect. There are many ways to look at this multiplier effect. In a business sense, if we look at the accelerated capital cost allowance, Canada has a very generous accelerated capital cost allowance. This allows businesses to modernize and to upgrade their equipment so they can be competitive in the 21st century.

We have mineral exploration credits so we could have these minerals more effectively explored and then sell them as products around the world. We have scientific research and development credits that assist our corporations to engage in research and innovation and eventually to take that quantum leap from innovation to commercialization. All of these we have to do effectively with the multiplier effect of our generous tax credit.

Opposition members seem to imply that our government is not compassionate with our spending policy. That is totally wrong. Let me share some of the examples where we are totally compassionate on this side.

We have the arts credit to encourage our youth to participate in the arts and to develop their literary and musical side. We have a fitness credit to encourage Canadians to be fit. We have a mass transit credit to encourage Canadians to use mass transit to reduce pollution in our environment. We have a live-in caregiver credit to allow seniors to live a dignified life in their own homes so they are not ending up in hospitals, old age homes, or totally alone. We have disability credits of many sorts that assist people who are hard of hearing, sight-impaired, and with other disabilities. All of these are totally compassionate measures of our government to recognize the needs of our citizens.

In the budget we also introduced the search and rescue volunteer credit to recognize the good work volunteers do in our society. There is also the adoption expense credit. We recognize that in today's world, many families are unable to have children, so we propose to reduce their adoption costs. There is also the medical expense credit.

The opposition also mentioned the immigrant investment program that we propose to delete. The immigrant investment program as it has existed for 30 years has not worked. At \$800,000 it brings in only jobs like convenience stores, dry cleaners, and small grocery stores. These do not work. We will implement a new investor immigrant venture capital fund that would bring money into Canada and we would treat it almost like the CBC's *Dragon's Den*.

All the economic elements are there for a balanced budget.

● (1045)

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's intervention carefully. He spoke about economics and balanced budgets. If we look across the country, we will find that it is in fact New Democrat governments that have proven track records of good fiscal management.

I would like to ask the member why his government has not adopted his balanced budget philosophy in the past eight budgets. It has delivered eight deficit budgets.

Could the member explain why the government has not delivered in the past eight budgets?

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Mr. Speaker, the economic cycle has its ups and downs. The last down cycle was in 2008, and if people had invested in the stock market they would have seen their stocks go down about 30%. Rather than using fairly draconian measures to bring the economy out of that down cycle, we have come up with a gradual way.

We cannot turn on a dime. A certain amount of time is needed to bring our budget to the country. These gradual changes are a steady method to make changes rather than making dramatic changes that would hurt the economy.

● (1050)

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague very well. As a successful businessman, I am sure he would never try to balance his books on hypothetical money coming from here and there, thereby allowing him to declare a surplus.

The phoney surplus that is supposed to happen in 2015 is based on inflated employment insurance, on a one-time-only selling of assets, and contingency money. For the government to predict that this would provide a \$6.4 billion surplus, which would in turn be invested, is hypothetical. It is phoney, and it is no way to run a business.

Would you look at your books that way?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would remind all members to address their comments to the chair.

*The Budget*

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for recognizing the fact that I was a successful businessman. That is very helpful. It gives my speaking here in the House some credibility.

Prior to entering politics and prior to being a successful businessman, I spent over five years in public accounting, where I had the opportunity to audit companies. I audited small corner-grocery stores all the way up to publicly listed companies and multinationals.

When we do a budget, we do not look at hypothetical income coming in or hypothetical expenses. We forecast what expenses would be. We actually forecast what income would be coming in given the economic condition. The assets are then invested behind that. In a way, it is a very measured type of activity. We consult various departments, staff, and experts who give us the input we need. We also look at the entire international environment that we are doing business in.

The member mentioned something about a contingency fund. As prudent businessmen, we always put a contingency reserve on our balance sheets to ensure that we meet our budgets. The \$3 billion contingency fund has been put in precisely for that, in order to be prudent and safe and to express to Canadians that we really know what we are doing when it comes to fiscal responsibility.

**Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to give my full support to economic action plan 2014.

This year's budget will continue Canada's global fiscal leadership. We have been leading the G7 in job creation and debt-to-GDP for some time now. This budget will deliver job creation and debt reduction, which are our government's key priorities. Reducing the debt plays a key role in job creation as it reduces government expense burdens, allowing for more spending on programs and support, and for job creation.

The budget also sends a strong signal of stability to businesses and investors. These financial management policies have elevated Canada to be one of the best places in the world to conduct business. Canada is envied around the world.

Most importantly, our government has achieved this result responsibly, not on the backs of taxpayers or with irresponsible fire-sales of important government assets. There will be no reduction in health care, equalization, or other transfers. In fact, they have all risen. In particular, the Province of Ontario will receive \$19.2 billion in support from Ottawa in 2014–15, a 56% increase since our government took power in 2006.

Whereas the opposition parties have continued to push for excess and irresponsible spending, our government has stayed the course, invested in job-creating infrastructure and initiatives, and consistently decreased the tax burden on Canadian families. On average, Canadian families pay \$3,400 less in taxes every year as a result of our government's initiatives and commitment to making sure Canadians keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets.

This budget is focused on key initiatives to keep our economy growing. I would like to cite a few measures in particular that mean a lot to my riding of Nipissing—Timiskaming.

First and foremost, the continued support for FedNor. FedNor, as members know, particularly in northern Ontario, plays a critical role in economic development. Since May 2011, I have been very successful in working with FedNor, and I am pleased that the funding has been secured in the budget.

Second, I argued along with my colleagues in northern Ontario for a fund targeted to small municipalities. I am hopeful that the announcement this afternoon will bear some fruit as part of the building Canada fund. These funds are important. These funds are for roads, bridges, and older water pipes.

Just over \$300 million will be invested in broadband Internet access infrastructure in rural and northern Canada. This is an important measure. This is key for many residents in my riding of Nipissing—Timiskaming. With this infrastructure, 98% of Canadians will have broadband access. That is quite a feat.

Apprentices in red-seal programs will gain access to over \$100 million in interest-free loans of up to \$4,000. This is golden for my riding. Twenty-six thousand Canadian apprentices will benefit and help close the skills gap in Canada. Local businesses have complained about skills shortages, and this will help them meet the demand and create new jobs.

In the next few months, the federal government will complete and launch the Canada jobs grant. This program will indeed be an important measure in my community. Canadians and businesses will have access to training grants of up to \$15,000, a key measure in the continued growth and development of our workforce.

Our federal government is committed to ensuring Canadians have access to job and skills training, and it will not allow politics to deny Canadians access to the training needed to gain employment.

● (1055)

The fifth measure that is indeed important for my riding of Nipissing—Timiskaming is innovation, research, and youth employment.

During a presentation last night by the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, it indicated that we are among the world's leaders in innovation. It encourages our government to step up and keep up that pace.

There will be the establishment of a Canada first research excellence fund; \$1.5 billion over the next decade will go to universities and post-graduate programs that would generate long-term economic opportunities for Canada; and up to \$40 million will go to 3,000 youth internships, which will target youth unemployment in Canada as well as in my riding of Nipissing—Timiskaming; and an additional \$15 million for up to 1,000 internships in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Therefore, Canada is on the right track. However, we need to remain focused, stay on course, and fulfill our commitments to Canadians.

*The Budget*

I am proud of this budget. I am proud to support it. The federal government is on the right track to balanced budgets, continued low taxes, and continued global financial leadership.

• (1100)

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech by the member. It is interesting that there was no mention of northern Ontario, FedNor, or the Ring of Fire in this budget. The Ring of Fire is \$60 billion, and the government cannot come to the table. There were a number of NDP MPs up there last Friday. We talked to the stakeholders who, in unison, said that the federal government was absent; so I was hoping there would be some mention of that in the budget.

The member mentioned FedNor. It was not mentioned in the budget. In fact, over the last four or five years, tens of millions of dollars have disappeared from FedNor. I was hoping some of that money would come back in this budget. As I believe we have four Conservative MPs in northern Ontario, why do the Conservatives hate northern Ontario so much?

**Mr. Jay Aspin:** Mr. Speaker, clearly the NDP, including its leader, continue to spread falsehoods in northern Ontario. He was up in northern Ontario just this past spring saying that all this money has disappeared from FedNor. The good news is that FedNor is the same. It is stable. When we are into a rationalization of government services, the status quo is good news.

As I mentioned to my hon. friend, I have achieved record funding with FedNor. FedNor continues to improve the lives and livelihoods of people in northern Ontario. FedNor is there in spades. Our government supports the full services of FedNor.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would say that it is not only northern Ontario that the government seems to hate and have a dislike for; it is also Atlantic Canada and basically rural Canada everywhere. There is nothing with respect to the grain crisis in western Canada, which is a result of the government's previous decisions.

The member mentioned the \$40 million over four years for the apprenticeship program. On that we agree. There needs to be an apprenticeship program. It accounts for about 3,000 people. What about the other 259,000 youth that are underemployed or out of work? What is in this budget to address their concerns?

Members know that one of the problems with the government is that it tinkers a little here and a little there, announces a little program here, but then it leaves 90% out, in terms of program availability. That is what it has done with young people in this country. We do need apprentices. However, other young people need opportunities too. Why is there nothing in this budget for them?

**Mr. Jay Aspin:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right. We have started. We have started with \$40 million in apprenticeships. That is a start, just like the broadband program we started years ago. As I mentioned, it covers 98% of Canadians.

I will make the member a pledge. As soon as we can recover the \$40 million in the sponsorship scandal, we will complete the rest of our apprenticeship program.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very excited about the good news for the youth of our country, the

good news in terms of jobs and skills training, apprenticeship, and youth employment. I would like the member to elaborate on these three areas because in his speech he did a commendable job of doing that. Perhaps we need to repeat some of that good information, so members opposite can get some new information.

• (1105)

**Mr. Jay Aspin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hard-working colleague for that question. As I mentioned, it is a start, with respect to apprenticeship loans. Apprentices in the red seal programs would gain access to over \$100 million in interest-free loans of up to \$4,000, which is a great start, and 26,000 Canadian apprentices would benefit and help close the gaps. It is a new program. It is a start. I am sure it will grow and help youth in Canada in the future.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I need to inform the House that I will be splitting my time with the fantastic member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. I am looking forward to that, after my speech is over.

The important thing to talk about in this budget is that it reminds me of one of my favourite television shows from the mid 1990s to the end of the 1990s, which was *Seinfeld*. *Seinfeld* was a show about nothing. It was a show about lots of blunder and lots of talk, but it was really about nothing, which is the same thing we have seen with this budget.

There was not a heck of a lot in the budget. It really comes down to choices and priorities. On this side of the House, we think the government's choices and priorities are wrong.

Are there a few good things in the budget? Of course there are. There are some things that we have been calling for, like rural and northern Broadbent—I mean, broadband. That was a Freudian slip.

The importance of broadband for northern and rural communities is something we have been stating all along, especially as we have seen the failure of the spectrum auction that the government has been putting out over the last year. We need broadband to grow our economy in the north, especially in northern cities and in rural communities.

Let us look at that and what the government did when it comes to the food inspectors. In the budget, we have 200 new food inspectors. That is fantastic. That is great. However, why is it that we get 200 new food inspectors when the government cut 300? We had to go through the biggest meat recall crisis in our country's history. We had the listeriosis meat recall. It just keeps showing that, when the government cuts and cuts and then makes the announcement that is putting 200 food inspectors in, it is just a falsehood.

### *The Budget*

When we talk about nothing, we are talking about a do-nothing budget. Areas of northern Ontario, such as the great city of Sudbury that I represent, as well as Thunder Bay and Rainy River and all of the great communities that I can think of there, are not mentioned in the budget. The two words do not come together.

My hon. colleague from Nipissing—Timiskaming talked earlier about FedNor, saying that the status quo is good enough. Actually, the status quo is not good enough. When we are keeping the Ring of Fire at bay because there is a lack of leadership, that is not good enough for northern Ontarians. We need the government to act on, to jump on, and to support economic growth in northern Ontario, but this budget does not do it.

There is also no mention of any infrastructure projects. It is as if the government completely forgot that northern Ontario existed.

Small businesses, again, are very important. We on this side of the House and maybe everyone in the House will agree that small businesses are the economic drivers and job creators in this country. However, the government eliminated the small business hiring credit. The Conservatives are turning their backs on job creation. The HCSB affects around 560,000 businesses across the country, and it generally captured companies with roughly 20 to 35 employees or fewer. The HCSB was estimated to cost around \$225 million annually.

Even when the Conservatives decided to include small business related measures in the budget, it was only in vague terms. For example, once again, business owners are left waiting for real action to combat something that we, on this side of the House, have been fighting on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis: the highest credit card processing fees in the world.

What is in the budget? To address the high cost of fees merchants pay banks to process credit cards, the government will consult on how to best disclose the cost of different payment methods. I repeat, consult. There are no further details or timelines. While we do not have a problem with such disclosure, the NDP is calling for stronger measures to address uncompetitive practices in the market.

It is not just the NDP that is calling for this. There are groups out there saying action is needed now. The Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association asked why we need to talk about this again and why the Conservatives need to consult about an issue that the organization and many others have been talking about for years.

● (1110)

Every time we see the interchange rate or these swipe fees go up, it not only affects small business owners, but every single Canadian. For every single Canadian, the price of whatever product they are buying goes up because the credit card companies continue to increase these rates. When they increase these rates, small business owners have two choices. First, they can eat the cost and then, unfortunately, have to close their doors, which none of us want to see, and stop accepting credit cards. In this day and age, credit cards are almost a public utility. Second, they can increase the price of their products to offset the cost that is being paid.

We can have action now on this. We waited until July of 2013 to hear from the Competition Tribunal to act on many of these anti-competitive practices that have been implemented by the credit card

companies and the banks. The Competition Tribunal then ruled that they cannot make the decision, that this is a political decision that needs to come back to Parliament. Since July, we have been waiting for action, and what we get from the government is more consultation.

That relates right back to this do-nothing budget. It is a matter of waiting until next year when the government says it will actually have a surplus, and then the government will act. However, if we look at the numbers, which even the Minister of Finance said, we could have been in a surplus this year. Now Canadian businesses and families have to wait another year before they will see any action on this and many other things that would save Canadians' pocketbooks, making life more affordable for them right now.

One of my other Conservative colleagues mentioned in his speech that we need to ensure that consumers have a balanced budget at home. Right now, Canadians have skyrocketing household debt. We could have taken action on many things that could have helped Canadian consumers right now, such as capping ATM fees. That is one. We had that debate here last week. That would keep more money in the pockets of Canadian consumers. While that would not address the household debt, it would still be a small piece in an overall puzzle to ensure that we are keeping money in the pockets of Canadians. That is one example.

What about ending the pay-to-pay billing program that we are seeing for many of the large institutions? I believe that is on page 175 of the budget, but it only seems to be going after the banks on this one. That is great, but what about all of the other ones? We need to have more details on that to ensure that we are not gouging low-income earners and seniors, who are mostly the ones affected by a pay-to-pay program. The pay-to-pay program is very simple: people who are getting paper bills are now being charged \$2 by some of these organizations to receive them. Some would say it is only \$2, but if we start adding it up, 10 or 15 bills per month multiplied by 12 months add up to a couple of hundred dollars. For seniors, that is rent or food on the table. There is a lot more we could do to address those types of issues.

There are many things we could have done with this budget. If the Conservatives had actually listened to some of our ideas and used them, we could have truly helped Canadians now.

One of the issues I am hearing about quite often in my riding relates to veterans. The veterans in my riding and the great citizens of Sudbury are actually appalled at what happened to veterans over the last few weeks. We are seeing offices close. This was an opportunity for us to act on making a difference in the lives of veterans. Keeping these offices open would have been paramount for so many of them.

*The Budget*

The citizens that I am hearing from in my riding were appalled at the closure that happened and would have liked to see this budget act on that. Unfortunately, the choices and priorities of the government really did not consider veterans. If we look at small businesses, consumers, and veterans, the priorities and choices of the government are wrong, and by 2015, hopefully, the government will be like a *Seinfeld* episode, with a lot of reruns.

• (1115)

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening intently to my colleague across the way and the Conservatives will not follow any financial or budgetary advice from that party.

I would also like to put something on the record. He talked about veterans, but failed to mention that since 2006 we have put more than \$5 billion toward veterans. He talked about the closing of the VAC offices, but he did not bother to mention that we have added another 600 points of entry. In five out of the eight offices, the VAC employee will still be in the same building, in HRSDC. We also know that in fact his group of PSAC members were the ones who created this terrible misunderstanding.

I would ask him to correct the facts.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, what they do on their side is first to blame the unions for everything, which is ridiculous. However, let me clear up some of the facts.

I had a veteran in my riding who went to one of the 600 points of light; it almost sounds like a George Bush statement when they refer to 600 points of service. He went and got in line at Service Canada, where the people could not pull up the file because they did not know how to get it. Then they gave him a 1-800 number to go home to call, to tell him to go back to Service Canada.

On this side of the House, we respect our veterans. We want to ensure that our veterans who fought for us, who gave us the right to stand here and to debate, get the service they need and that when they can get it, that it is on time, so that they not have to go through this whole rigmarole the current government is putting them through.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I also want to touch on the veterans issue, because one of the clear responsibilities of a federal government is to bring in policies in the interests of all Canadians. This budget would do anything but; it is very selective in what it would do. Also the responsibility of a government is to redress some of the concerns that it may have created, and one of them certainly is the closure of veterans services offices.

I will relate my example. A person went to Service Canada, not to get service as a veteran but to get a passport, and waited 40 minutes. How do members think a veteran with some serious problems is going to feel standing in a line at Service Canada? Is it going to help him or her?

I wonder if the member could expand on that a little more and what the government's real responsibility is in the interests of all Canadians, which is not in this budget.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, that relates to my comment on the budget being about choices and priorities. I do not think the choices and the priorities the Conservatives have made are actually

helping when we are talking about veterans. Opening these offices again is a choice that the Conservatives could have made, after hearing from veterans from coast to coast who were asking for that. The government made the choice not to, and instead is choosing to send the veterans to all of the Service Canada offices.

The Service Canada offices provide great service. There are great people who are doing great work there. However, the needs of the veterans are different. The needs of our veterans might be so specific that they need that counsellor there to provide that service. It comes down again to choices and priorities for Canadians, when it comes to being consumers, when it comes to small businesses, when it comes to our youth and our unemployed youth.

As my colleague also mentioned, what about the 250,000 unemployed youth in this country? The choice the Conservatives made was not to support them. On this side of the House, we want to ensure that we support our youth, our unions, our veterans, and the great work being done by all of my colleagues on this side of the House.

• (1120)

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise to speak to budget 2014. Having looked at the budget, unfortunately, I find it a cynical document with nothing in it to address the most urgent needs of Canadians.

I cannot find anything in the budget for child care. I cannot find anything for affordable housing, I cannot find anything for veterans, and I cannot find anything that would help make life more affordable for ordinary families in this country.

Instead, the Conservatives have tabled a political document, one that is much more concerned with setting the stage for an election budget in 2015 than it is in meeting the real needs of Canadians.

The Conservatives are unfortunately continuing down the austerity path, with large, though quiet, cuts in government expenditures. These would result in job losses in communities all across the country and reductions in critical government services.

It seems clear that the Conservatives have held back on announcing a balanced budget, both to justify further cuts in services and then to allow them to present an election year budget with whatever tax cuts or new expenditures the Conservatives would think might convince voters to forget their poor economic performance and re-elect them. No matter how much they try to hide that record, we know there are 300,000 more unemployed in Canada now than before the recession. Moreover, federal debt is at an all-time high, and Canada is running all-time high trade deficits. So much for the Conservatives being better managers of the economy.

Where are the incentives for job creation in the budget? New Democrats have proposed practical measures to help Canadians get back to work, like job creation tax credits for youth and small business. Instead, the budget perpetuates the chaos in job training programs and seems likely to prolong a dispute with the provinces over job training. In the meantime, what will we see? I am expecting more ads for non-existent programs.

### *The Budget*

We have also heard the Conservatives in the last couple of days repeatedly ridicule the leader of the third party for his statement that budgets can somehow balance themselves. While it is, I admit, a somewhat unusual statement, I think it is actually one that describes well the Conservative approach to employment, where they seem to believe that jobs will create themselves and that the government has no role in trying to help make sure Canadians have those family supporting jobs they are looking for.

At a time when we have seen several economists come forward to point out the obvious, that the historical record of austerity budgets is that they never lead to growth and prosperity, we can only wonder where we would actually be now in this country if the minority government situation in Canada had not forced the Conservatives to adopt a stimulus program in the early days of the recession. However, in this budget, we can see that the Conservatives have reverted to their ideological form and are now back to trying to cut their way to prosperity.

There are also some other ways in which the budget reverts to form for the Conservatives. This is also a budget with no mention of climate change. Instead, there is money to speed up project approvals at the National Energy Board, with some \$28 million over two years. This, of course, is a confirmation of the intention of the Conservative government to continue down the wrong path of over-investment in the fossil fuel industries, which are, of course, major contributors to global warming. The budget fails to eliminate the ongoing subsidies to big oil and in fact expands them with the introduction of further tax breaks for offshore oil and gas exploration.

What would New Democrats like to see instead? We would like to see restoration of the eco-energy retrofit program. It would not only put us on a path toward more sustainable energy, but also help homeowners reduce their energy bills, making it easier to make ends meet at the end of the month.

Some of my colleagues on the other side might ask, is there nothing positive I can see in this budget? I will admit there are a few things here that may be positive. I say that with reservation, because I too often have seen references to things the government intends to do that have either failed to materialize or have been so deluded to have little real impact on the economy.

Still, I am glad to see a promise to do something about pay-to-pay billing. I am glad to see money to expand access to high-speed Internet in rural and remote areas, and I am glad to see interest-free loans for those in the red seal apprenticeship programs.

I am also glad to see the government re-investing in food safety, and I am glad to see this promise to re-hire 200 food inspectors. I have to remind the government that this is necessary, because it previously cut more than 300 inspectors in its ill-advised shift to an approach where companies inspect themselves. This is the same approach it tried to apply to rail safety, which has resulted in tragedies like those we saw in Lac-Mégantic in Quebec.

• (1125)

Although I am prepared to recognize a few good things, I have to say that these are far outweighed by some important cuts that will have a heavy impact on constituents in my riding. While this is

generally a do-nothing budget, and I agree that is true, there are some things here that will have real impacts.

One of those things is the attack on the supplemental health benefits of retired public servants. I have more than 1,000 retired public servants living in my riding, who have written to me with concerns about the government's treatment of their future. The Conservatives are unfairly doubling the health care costs of a large group of seniors who already live on fixed incomes. They made their plans based on a good faith bargain that was struck with the government. That has been betrayed by the Conservative government, and they have no way to respond because they are already retired. This will cause very serious problems.

I heard a member on the other side, in debate, say that they can choose not to have extended health benefits. Of course, we know what that will lead to, which is probably financial disaster for seniors without extended health care benefits.

Another serious problem in my riding is the two-year freeze on spending in all government departments. We know that annual operating costs will inevitably increase. This freeze will result in across-the-board reductions in important government services and mounting job losses, whether through attrition or lay-offs. We have seen the Department of National Defence put off capital expenditures that it promised, which will lead to the delay of purchase and delivery of important equipment to the Canadian Forces.

Another thing we have seen in this budget is a renewed attack on charities and trade unions. It is clear that the Conservative government is bound and determined to use bureaucratic witch hunts to go after those it perceives to be its enemies.

As I am concerned that I have limited time to talk about this budget, I want to go back to what I think is missing from it. There are many things, easy things, that are not high cost, that the Conservative government could have done to help families make ends meet at the end of the month.

In this budget, we find no cap on ATM fees. In the debate on ATM fees, again and again I heard Conservatives stand up and say they did not understand what the problem was. Why did people not just go to their own bank?

I can tell members that there are parts of my riding where people do not have a bank. They are forced to depend on these cash machines that charge up to \$6.00 or \$7.00 for withdrawals.

There is nothing in this budget on excessive credit card fees. I am not just talking about consumers here, but both consumers and small business. These excessive credit card fees contribute to the skyrocketing profits of banks and reduced bottom lines for small businesses. When many families run out of money at the end of the month, they do not really have a choice other than to use the credit card to buy necessities, and they end up paying these high fees.

*The Budget*

There is nothing in this budget that restores services to veterans. In my riding, which is a very large military riding, I sat down with veterans at the Legion, along with my NDP leader, just after Remembrance Day. We met with injured veterans and heard their very personal stories of how tough it is for them, and how tough it will be when they lose face-to-face services that they need to help them with serious operational health injuries, including mental health injuries.

Instead, in this budget we see that the government intends to press ahead with its closures and reductions of service for veterans. Its line, which I frankly find insulting to veterans, is to say that there are basically 600 phone lines, or offices that veterans can go to, which have no specialization in their needs and, in practice, are unable to help them.

There is nothing in this budget to address skyrocketing household debt, advance public safety, and there is no commitment to expand the renewable energy sector. The renewable energy sector is one that creates far more jobs in communities across the country per dollar of capital expenditure than does investing in big oil and gas. There is nothing for the millions of Canadians who are looking for those good family-supporting jobs, which so often disappear from our local economies.

What we have is a do-nothing budget. It is a political document designed to give room to the Conservatives to try to bribe Canadians with their own money to vote for them again in 2015. I could not be more disappointed in the Conservatives' record and this budget.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend across the way continues the NDP's attack on oil sands workers and their families.

A recent study, entitled "Oilsands the giant of Canada's economy", says that oil sands production supports more than 478,000 direct and indirect jobs. Why the member opposite is attacking these families is beyond me. The study also expects that government revenues from the total effect of oil sands investment in Canada will jump from \$28 billion to \$61 billion in 2025.

My question relates to a recent poll that said there is remarkable consensus about deficit reduction that crosses regional and party lines. Almost 60% of Canadians believe that the deficit should be eliminated before any increased spending occurs.

This is very surprising. The Harris/Decima poll also found that even among self-identified New Democrats, the split was 48 to 44 in favour of retiring any deficit before increasing spending.

Could the member opposite inform the House why he and his party are so offside with public opinion?

• (1130)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to thank the member for his question because I think his question is quite distorted. I have never said anything to attack the families who work in the oil sands. I am saying that if we put all of our eggs in the basket of fossil fuels we are headed down the wrong road.

I am not saying close down the oil sands and lay off those workers. What I am saying is let us have a sustainable future that will provide family-supporting jobs all across the country, and not just in

one area. We will see what happens when we come to the end of those oil sands investments. If oil prices drop, those people are going to be laid off very quickly. This is not an affordable industry in the long term.

With regard to the second part of the member's question, I am not opposed to balanced budgets. The government has choices to make, and the government has chosen to give up billions of dollars in revenue by giving tax cuts to big corporations and then paying for those on the backs of ordinary working Canadians.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working on the public safety committee with the member who just spoke.

I am interested in the energy question. The government seems to emphasize just one part of the energy sector, with no attempt whatsoever to develop a national energy strategy for the country that would encompass everything from wind, to biomass, to oil, to hydro, and that is what we should be doing.

My question relates to the budget itself. I know the government likes to attack unions, but the very title of the budget is "The Road to Balance: Creating Jobs and Opportunities", and I have not found anything in this document, other than the red seal, that might assist young people to gain jobs. I do not see anything in it that will create jobs. I see the Conservatives have failed to fix a lot of the damage they have already done in seasonal industries, which is taking jobs and opportunities away from people in my region.

Does the member see anything in the budget that is creating jobs and opportunities for Canadians, other than leaving in place the great corporate tax breaks where corporations are sitting on \$500 billion and not creating investment in new technology?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Malpeque for his question. It is one of the things that I was most disappointed with in the budget. As I said in my speech, the government seems to believe that jobs create themselves.

We know that one of the quickest ways to get job creation going is to do things that would help promote small business. If the government had done something about poverty or seniors living in poverty, those people would go out and spend that money in their local communities. They would spend it in small businesses, their corner stores, and they would help to get the economy going again. However, there is nothing here where the government creates a climate that would help small business grow and develop. There is nothing for youth employment, which is a very severe crisis all across this country.

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

It is a great privilege for me to stand in this House today and speak to economic action plan 2014, which is appropriately titled "The Road to Balance: Creating Jobs and Opportunities".

### *The Budget*

Our Conservative government has one of the best track records for economic growth and management of national debt in the developed world. We are the envy of many nations around the world who wonder how it is that Canada has done so well.

I think there are a variety of reasons for this, but first and foremost, the leadership and sound fiscal management that our Prime Minister has shown throughout his time in office has had a major impact. I continue to be very proud of the Prime Minister and his efforts. I know of no other leader who has shown such tenacity in making sure that our beloved Canada stays on the right track and eliminates the deficit as promised. In a related subject, I would like to thank our extremely hard-working Minister of Finance. With his economic action plan 2014, he has delivered his tenth budget. The minister continues to do excellent work for Canadians, and we are looking forward to his continuing guidance and leadership as well.

With these things said, this is yet another good plan for Canadians. This is a budget that Canadians can be proud of. This plan will get us back on track and in the black, as promised. Canada will be deficit-free at the federal level by next year, which is the icing on the cake.

This budget is great for the people of my home province of Alberta, as well as the people in my riding of Medicine Hat, which I am so very proud to represent in Ottawa. This budget is indeed good news for my constituents. There are a number of initiatives that will be beneficial to them, and I appreciate the opportunity to enumerate some of those in the time I have today.

I think one of the bigger pieces that applies is with respect to first nations education. I was pleased to attend the announcement last week, near Lethbridge, of the first nations control of first nations education bill, with the Prime Minister and my colleagues. This positive step forward is being highly praised. It is one of those cases where the consultation process worked very well to reach an agreement that was acceptable to all sides.

This bill will mean that first nations students from kindergarten to grade 12 on reserve will have access to accountable and higher education. I am pleased that our government has decided to move forward with these important reforms.

With the economic action plan, we are pledging to reduce the regulatory burden. We will do this through the red tape reduction plan so that small and medium-sized businesses can save time and money. I know that a number of initiatives to reduce red tape have been implemented and have been a boon to small business owners in the Medicine Hat riding. These are things like the one-for-one rule, which means that for every new regulatory burden that is placed on small business, one must be removed.

Another important piece of the budget that will increase economic activity in my riding is a plan to reduce barriers within Canada. This will help local businesses that may be considering markets. One of the best markets is right here at home, and we need to do everything we can in our power as federal legislators to ensure we are not obstructing trade within our own country.

We have already made some progress on this file, with multi-party support. I make reference to the highly praised legislation that was introduced and worked on tirelessly by my colleague from Okanagan—Coquihalla. Thanks to his efforts, the federal restrictions on

having wine delivered from other provinces have been removed, and now the ball is in the province's court to act. Our government will continue with these initiatives to foster internal trade between provinces.

With respect to support for farmers, we will continue to hold the best interests of farmers at heart as we craft public policy. I know that many of my farmers are more than satisfied with our government's record on delivering results for people in the agriculture sector. I know that many wheat producers are very pleased that our government got rid of the single-desk at the Canadian Wheat Board. They now have the same rights as wheat and barley farmers in all provinces east of Manitoba.

We will continue to support them with programs, such as the new pilot price insurance program for cattle and hog producers in western Canada. I know that many of my hog producers remember the crisis of the late nineties and early 2000 in their industry. Indeed, that was a dark hour. However, they are resilient folk and they stuck through the lean times. This pilot project will offer insurance against unexpected price declines within a production cycle.

We will also support farmers by extending the tax deferral for livestock to include bees, and all horses over 12 months, that are kept for breeding when sold due to drought or excess moisture.

With respect to the review process for pipeline projects, we will provide \$28 million to the National Energy Board to ensure that project applications are reviewed in a comprehensive and timely manner. This is going to be important to my constituents, and indeed all Albertans. As we are aware, Alberta is the energy heartland of Canada. We need to ensure there is a fair process that is implemented within an appropriate amount of time.

● (1135)

We will be taking steps with economic action plan 2014 to strengthen our justice system. In Alberta, we would create two new positions on the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench in order to ensure justice in our communities.

Economic action plan 2014 also supports the implementation of a long-awaited victims' bill of rights. Our government has always stood up for the rights of victims of crime when other parties have failed to do so. I am so very proud of our commitment to supporting victims with economic action plan 2014. We have also pledged \$8.1 million over five years, starting in 2016-17, to create a DNA-based missing persons index. Once created, it would help bring closure to the families of missing persons through DNA matching.



*The Budget*

We are committed to investing over \$150 million over the next five years to enhance the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's food safety programs to ensure that Canada's food supply is safe. I know that will speak to many of the meat packers that rely on that industry in my riding. It also reaffirms our government's commitment to ensure that Canada continues to have one of the highest-rated food safety systems in the world.

With this new funding, the CFIA expects to hire 200 new inspectors and other staff, develop programs that would minimize food safety risks, and enhance Canada's capacity to prevent unsafe food from entering Canada, which would offer better protection for consumers.

One program that has been popular in the Medicine Hat riding is the new horizons for seniors program, which allows more seniors to be active in their community. We would be allocating another \$5 million through this economic action plan.

One of the major initiatives announced in this plan is new tax relief for search and rescue workers. We are introducing the search and rescue volunteers tax credit in recognition of the important role played by those who put themselves at risk for the security and safety of our communities. I know there are some folks back in my riding who are very active in search and rescue efforts when needed. I think they would definitely take advantage of this tax credit. I hope they will.

We experienced some very heavy flooding last year in Alberta, as is well documented. With this economic action plan, our government would provide up to \$200 million to establish a national disaster mitigation program to better protect Canadians and their communities from natural disasters.

For Alberta, total major transfers would be \$5.2 billion in 2014-15, including \$3.7 billion through the Canada health transfer, which would be an increase of 129% since 2005-06, under the previous Liberal administration. It would also include \$1.5 billion through the Canada social transfer, which would be an increase of almost 148% since 2005-06.

Our budget has a major component that focuses on training. We would create the Canada apprenticeship loan, which would provide apprentices in red seal trades with access to over \$100 million in interest-free loans.

We would also be investing \$75 million targeted for older workers.

A topic of interest, especially as of late, has been our continued commitment to our Canadian veterans. I know there has been a certain amount of misinformation out there and I want to ensure that the record is set straight. Our government has invested billions of dollars on programs for our veterans since we came into office in 2006. In the 2012-13 year alone, we spent approximately \$3.1 billion in direct support for our veterans and their families.

In economic action plan 2014, we would be implementing our priority hiring of veterans strategy. Essentially, in recognition of their service to Canada, our Conservative government is proposing to enhance employment opportunities in the federal public service for medically released Canadian Armed Forces personnel by creating a

statutory hiring priority in the Public Service Employment Act. This would mean there would be a statutory hiring priority for armed forces personnel who are medically released for service-related reasons.

There is a large Canadian Forces base in my riding, CFB Suffield. I am proud that our government is continuing to stand up for our veterans and for the members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Our government has put Canada on a sound financial footing and continues to ensure that we stay on top as we work to pull our great country out of the great recession. Our record thus far speaks for itself: over one million net new jobs created, many of those in the private sector; low debt-to-GDP ratio; and relatively low unemployment. We have lowered taxes by putting money back into the pockets of hard-working Canadian families.

With this in mind, I look forward to questions from my hon. colleagues.

● (1140)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague opposite. We now know with certainty that this Conservative government has presented a do-nothing election budget.

This government is using a carrot and stick approach. This budget is just a smokescreen. There is nothing in the budget about provincial health transfers and the government has created a fiscal imbalance between the federal government and the provinces. Once again, there is nothing in this budget about that.

This time, the government is using the stick to tell Canadian families that are having trouble making ends meet to wait until 2015, when it will dangle the carrot. This is obviously a pre-election game.

According to surveys, and as pointed out many times, health is the priority for Canadians. That does not seem to be the case for our colleagues opposite. I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the provincial transfers and working with the provinces to possibly cover costs that will rise with an aging population.

● (1145)

[*English*]

**Mr. LaVar Payne:** Mr. Speaker, as a federal government, we are finally doing what we need to do to make sure we have a balanced budget. A balanced budget means that we will end up with more surpluses, and with that we will be able to pay down debt and maybe spend some more money to help the provinces. However, my colleague must remember that the provinces are responsible for their own debts. They need to make sure that their spending is under control.

In terms of the health transfer, we have increased health transfers to the provinces by 6% per year. It is a huge amount of money that we have committed, and we will continue to commit that money to the provinces.

*The Budget*

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member was talking about debt and the government balancing the books. That is a joke. An op-ed in the *Ottawa Citizen* this morning stated, “Number of budget deficit targets hit by Finance Minister - 0”.

We know this is really a pre-election budget. The Conservatives should have balanced the books this year but did not, because they are leaving that until next year for strictly partisan reasons while leaving many Canadians out there with serious hurt.

My question to the member for Medicine Hat relates to the farm sector. I am looking at the reference in the budget to the farm sector. The member must really find it painful to go home on weekends when out west right now, in his area, grain continues to pile up. Fifty-three ships at the port in Vancouver are waiting for grain. Grain prices have been discounted 40%. All of this is a result of the decisions the Conservative government made previously relative to the Wheat Board, not in terms of its structure but in failing to realize what the Wheat Board did in terms of the logistics of transportation by collecting of the grain and getting it into the hull of a ship in time.

How come there is nothing in the budget to deal with the crisis that exists in the western grain sector? Why did the government not step up to the plate and deal with that problem?

**Mr. LaVar Payne:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Malpeque probably knows that our committee has been studying this difficult situation with the grain farmers. It has absolutely nothing to do with the Canadian Wheat Board. When the Canadian Wheat Board was in operation, it would take only a little bit of grain and send it out, and then maybe a few months later it would take a little bit more. This situation has absolutely nothing to do with the board. We have talked with the railways and with the grain companies. It has absolutely nothing to do with the Canadian Wheat Board.

A number of the problems are with the railways, and they need to make sure that they step up. We have had discussions with them. The minister has had several discussions with them over the last few weeks and will continue to do so to make sure that we resolve the situation for our western grain farmers.

• (1150)

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand in the House today to highlight some of the many positive measures contained in economic action plan 2014.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the great people of Richmond Hill for giving me the privilege of representing them in the House and for their trust and confidence.

Canada's economic action plan is working. Over one million net new jobs, the vast majority being in the private sector and high-wage occupations, have been created since the trough of the recession. These include 15,000 jobs in Richmond Hill and 86,000 jobs in the York region in the manufacturing, construction, wholesale trade, professional and business service sectors, and more. It is because of the focus of our government on what matters most to my constituents in Richmond Hill and to all Canadians, that being jobs and economic growth, that Canada boasts the strongest job creation record of all the G7 countries, and importantly, Canada's total government net debt

burden remains the lowest by far of any G7 country and among the lowest of the advanced G20 countries.

That is why I am thrilled that economic action plan 2014 maintains its focus on strengthening our economy while keeping taxes low and returning to a balanced budget by 2015.

Balancing the books is essential to our long-term prosperity. Our long-standing belief that a sound fiscal position is essential for Canada's long-term economic growth is the driving force behind economic action plan 2014.

The actions in economic action plan 2014 will not only return us to budgetary balance by 2015 but will produce savings totalling \$9.1 billion over the next six years. These savings are in addition to our previous actions taken since budget 2010. These actions over the last four years, including 160 different tax reductions and lowering federal tax to levels not seen in 50 years, benefit Canadians every single day.

At the same time, we are supporting the sustainability of the services and programs Canadians rely on and inspiring investor confidence. We are making record transfer payments to the provinces and territories. For example, transfers in Ontario are currently \$19.2 billion per year from the federal government. This is an increase of 76% from what they were under the old Liberal government.

These actions have all contributed to making Canada a recognized leader on the world economic stage for prudent fiscal management. Canada has recently leapt from sixth to second in Bloomberg's list of the best places in the world to do business. This is an incredible accomplishment.

The height of the global economic crisis in fiscal year 2009-10 was not that long ago. That same year, at the urging of and with the support of the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party, our government took a deficit of \$55 billion. That spending was necessary to pull Canada out of the depths of the deep and sudden recession, and it worked. Owing to the prudent actions of our government prior to that global economic collapse, when we paid down \$37 billion worth of debt that we had inherited from the Liberal government, we had the room to react quickly when it was required to do so.

The complete elimination of a \$55 billion deficit in just five years is nothing short of amazing, and I thank the world's greatest Minister of Finance for that historic accomplishment. Balancing the budget and reducing debt will allow tax dollars to be spent on more important programs instead of interest costs. It will strengthen our ability to respond to longer-term challenges, such as an unexpected global economic shock or an aging population.

*The Budget*

Indeed, economic action plan 2014 steps up to the plate in response to the reality of a looming older demographic. For example, \$5 million has been allocated annually to the new horizons for seniors program. This is in addition to the current allocation. The new horizons program has been incredibly successful in Richmond Hill. It has provided funding for community-based projects that encourage seniors to share their skills and experience with others and it allows them to benefit from and contribute to the quality of life in the community.

● (1155)

By providing a way for seniors to mentor others, volunteer, and enjoy and benefit from social and educational opportunities, new horizons for seniors is improving the quality of life of our seniors in Canada from coast to coast to coast.

Our Conservative government recognizes the challenges many working Canadians face in balancing their work obligations with caring for an infirm or older adult at home. In response, we would launch a Canadian employers for caregivers plan that would identify promising workplace practices that support caregivers.

We also know that small businesses are crucial to Richmond Hill's economy, to Canadian communities across the country, and to Canada's long-term prosperity. We are firmly committed to delivering both lower taxes and less red tape.

I am pleased that economic action plan 2014 would provide further support for our small businesses and entrepreneurs so that they could create even more jobs in our communities. For example, the reductions in the small business tax rate to 11% and increases in the small business income limit to \$500,000 would provide small businesses with approximately \$2.2 billion in tax relief in 2014. That is money that could be invested in equipment and new jobs.

The need to cut business red tape was consistently one of the top recommendations I heard at my Richmond Hill pre-budget consultations. I will be pleased to tell them that cutting unnecessary red tape is exactly what this budget would commit to doing. In so doing, entrepreneurs would have more time to focus on what they do best: creating jobs and economic growth.

During our pre-budget consultations, small businesses told us that now is not the time to increase CPP or EI premiums. I am pleased that our budget would maintain the levels at 2013 levels.

The business sector in my riding is pleased with this support. I was happy to receive an email yesterday from the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce that said:

This budget presents the continuity of a plan for economic growth that builds on Canada's economic and fiscal advantages. The measures announced by the government will help Canadian businesses prosper and compete.

Also high on the list of recommendations from my residents was an investment in skills training, beyond that of just resumé or interview preparation, that would actually provide the on-the-job training necessary for new employees to succeed. I am happy to tell them that the new Canada job grant would be launched to better align training with labour market needs.

Employers have told us that they would support skills training in a way that is easy to access and that has minimal red tape. The Canada

job grant would do just that by taking into account the flexibility employers need. Businesses with a plan to train unemployed Canadians would receive two-thirds of the cost, up to \$10,000, in government contributions.

The federal government is working closely with provinces and territories toward the implementation of the Canada job grant and the renewal of labour market agreements. In jurisdictions where agreements are not secured, the Government of Canada would deliver the Canada job grant starting April 1, 2014, directly through Service Canada.

I would also like to highlight that a new generation of labour market agreements for persons with disabilities would also come into effect. Over the next four years, we would provide \$222 million annually through those transfers, to be matched by the provinces and territories, to better meet the needs of people with disabilities.

There are many other ways economic action plan 2014 would benefit Canadians. It would take additional steps to support the charitable sector, improve the health of Canadians, support our arts and cultural communities, honour our veterans, and help Canadians in need. It would strengthen the regulatory environment and provide the basis for the implementation of an expression-of-interest economic immigration system to support Canada's labour markets.

As it has been mentioned elsewhere, our plan to return to balanced budgets is not an end unto itself but a means to increase Canada's economic potential, improve employment opportunities for all Canadians, and raise our standard of living.

On behalf of my constituents in Richmond Hill, I look forward to the speedy passage and implementation of economic action plan 2014. I call on all members of the House to support its passage.

● (1200)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I am very pleased to be able to ask him a question because he is very familiar with the immigration file. He may be one of the few people in the House who can answer my question.

My question concerns the immigrant investor program. The government announced in the budget that this program will be abolished. However, Quebec seems surprised and concerned.

This is my first question. Will Quebec be able to continue using the immigrant investor program?

*The Budget*

My second question is on the same issue. This morning, in *La Presse*, the Premier of Saskatchewan, Mr. Wall, said he was frustrated with the elimination of this program. He believes that it was working and that it was important for Saskatchewan.

What would my colleague say to Mr. Wall?

[English]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question and welcome her to the citizenship and immigration committee, where she is both an amicable and intelligent contributor on an ongoing basis.

The investor program, quite frankly, was not working. It was not effective. What is in the budget would be an improvement to the program. It is a new investor program that would include venture capital investment and would set limits that would be beneficial to both companies and individuals who want to invest in Canada. It would also set a standard that Canadians expect of people who want to use the economic stream in our immigration system to come to Canada.

We believe that the new system would help create employment and would be more beneficial to both investors and Canadians, and we look forward to its implementation. I hope the hon. member will support the budget so that we can get to it in an expeditious manner.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague on the government side referred to the finance minister as the greatest finance minister in the world. I want to ask a question related to that, because he just delivered the budget.

I want to cast my mind back to when the Prime Minister, in 2011, talked about a promise he was going to deliver if the budget was balanced by about this time. It dealt with income splitting. At the time, I thought he was getting a little ahead of himself, but he made that solemn engagement. We did not hear anything about it until very recently. Now the world's greatest finance minister seems to be casting some doubt on whether that is a good policy, yet based on yesterday's question period, I got the distinct impression that the Prime Minister felt that, yes, this was something, because he had given his solemn promise back in 2011.

I would like to hear from my hon. colleague whether it is the intention of his party and government to hold to that promise made the Prime Minister in 2011.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister was abundantly clear. We will visit new opportunities for investment in the budget that will benefit all Canadians when we get to a balanced budget. At this point, we are very close to balancing the budget. We expect that by 2015, we will be there. It is premature at this point to speculate on what will be implemented in the budget of 2015, but I have every confidence in the finance minister, who I firmly believe is the best finance minister in the world, and certainly every confidence in my leader, the right hon. Prime Minister of Canada, that we will deliver on our promise.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be sharing my time with the member for Compton—Stanstead with regard to this debate on the budget.

In the first moments, I want to note that this budget comes with an interesting caveat. I heard the Conservatives complain many times

that the Liberals were building in contingency funds and surpluses and money that would be used for political advantage later on.

There is a "\$3-billion risk adjustment" included in this budget. At the same time, with regard to this budget, there is some hypocrisy relative to the past in this chamber. The Conservatives were very clear about saying that. It was the Jean Chrétien government in particular, with Paul Martin as finance minister, that liked to do this. It always had a contingency fund, and all of a sudden, magical money would show up at the last minute. Ironically, it often happened just prior to an election year.

It seems to me that this is going to be the path, if we believe the numbers we have in front of us.

Every budget has some good things. When members of Parliament come to this chamber for budget day, they have been working all year advocating and pushing for different items, whether it be in their constituencies, in Ottawa, at committee, in the chamber here, or in the hallways. All these issues deal with our one Canada. Unfortunately, it appears that over the last number of years, when the Conservatives have talked about money, programs, and services, they have talked about it as if it is their own money. It is not. It is Canadian taxpayers' money, and the Canadian taxpayers deserve accountability for it, which comes from every single one of the members who sit in this chamber.

This budget has some good things in it. I would say that money for the Windsor—Detroit border crossing is positive. I will go into some issues related to how it is being dispensed, but it is a positive step forward. There are some challenges with some of the practices, and the vulnerabilities are significant.

We also have some positive auto announcements in this budget. Thanks to the government, it is having to renew early, way ahead of time, a program the New Democrats said was deficient, because the industry is telling it that they need to be at the table. Unfortunately, we are in a reactive mode as opposed to a proactive mode. That is a change we would like to see.

With regard to my community, some interesting things took place after the last budget. We saw the erosion of significant services that are affecting our economy. We saw some significant closures of offices that affect Canadians from different walks of life: seniors, persons with disabilities, veterans, business owners, and business operators. All are being affected by a shortsighted attempt to attack our public service and an ideological drive for across-the-board cuts. That is not a business plan for managing a nation, departments, and economic and social activity in this country. It is an ideological drive just to reduce costs, and it does not always do that.

*The Budget*

I would point out that one of the significant cuts we have had in the Windsor region was the loss of our mail sorting. Our mail sorting used to be done more efficiently in Windsor than anywhere else. It had an excellent record for many years, and we lost all of that. Instead of being done in Windsor, the mail is now stacked up on trucks, sent to London on Highway 401, which is crowded as it is and which affects the infrastructure, through all kinds of inclement weather. It is sorted and brought back to Windsor, where it is finally redistributed back to the businesses and homeowners. We have seen a significant change in the turnaround of mail. That is to the detriment of our businesses and citizens who use the service.

• (1205)

Now we see the attack on home delivery. Despite the post office having made a profit 17 out of the last 18 years, we are going to lose home delivery. Then we are actually going to have the cost of delayed mail service. There will be a cost to that.

Retail has things at the end of their aisles, loss leaders, which are a particular service or item that may not make money but leads to other economic activity. I would argue that our postal service is the same thing, even though it does make money almost all of the time. We saw the loss of that service and it affected us as well.

The Consulate General of Canada office is closed in Detroit. We have one of the highest diversity rates in immigration in my constituency and yet one cannot go into the Walker Road immigration office as a member of the public. People are not allowed there unless they are being sworn in. People cannot go in and check on their case anymore. The office does not open its doors. This is despite the fact that the immigration cases that we process directly affect our economy and our social vibrancy because those individuals are in a holding pattern until their cases are processed. When they are finally done, we are talking about employment opportunities, school for children, and family reunification. We are talking about the individual and the family being able to move on.

We have seen cuts to front-line services, like the CBSA. A government that is supposed to be tough on crime has taken away front-line officers who work in counter-intelligence to break cases and also stop guns, drugs, and smuggling into Canada. We have seen cuts in other areas.

Thank goodness, one of the positive things we have in the budget is the increase in food inspections. However, that came because hundreds were laid off before that, as deregulation was attempted in an industry that is very important for our export economy.

One of the most significant closures we have seen is our veterans office. Our veterans office in Windsor had activity of approximately 4,000 cases per year. We had 13 workers. It cost \$1 million and was worth every cent. It is closed now. Our veterans are not happy with this. It was a place where they could go with dignity and privacy to have their case examined.

Why does the government want to cut these offices across Windsor, only saving a little on the surface, and force our veterans to alternative services that just do not meet the same needs?

At Service Canada there is no privacy. They do not know the veteran's case file and veterans are often rerouted somewhere else. It does not work. As for the promise that they can be visited at home,

as a former social worker I can say that home visits are a very serious thing to consider. There is not only the safety of the individual, they have to be comfortable with someone coming to their home, but there are also other issues to ensure the integrity of the service provided for both parties and other complications. Our caseworkers are going to have to drive from London, Ontario, which means per diems, costs, longer waiting times, and all those things.

I spent a lot of time talking about those cuts, but I want to conclude with this. The border crossing and the auto funds in Windsor are critically important. However, we want to see them done with accountability, and we will be pressing the government on those accountability issues. We were there from the beginning and we will see it through to the end, but it is going to be transparent. It is going to be done the proper way, and we are going to make sure that taxpayers get what they deserve.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his excellent demonstration that the announcements in the budget are attempts to fix glaring errors made over the past two or three years. He mentioned the cuts to the Canada Border Services Agency, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the RCMP, as well as the cuts to programs and the workforce. Over the last few years, we have been strongly opposed to those errors. The government is now making a modest attempt—let us face it—to fix them, thinking that everything will work out and making people believe that it will balance the budget next year. I am sorry, but the government is once again mistaken in thinking that Canadians are so forgiving.

Could my colleague elaborate on the government's attempts to fix its past mistakes?

• (1215)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I have raised with the border crossing in Windsor is that now, because of the focus of the Conservative government being on Keystone in Washington, we do not have some of the supports we had on the Michigan and the U.S. side that we used to have as an ally. We are actually having to spend money to buy property acquisitions on the U.S. side and also move hydro and a number of different things for their plaza.

*The Budget*

What I have raised is in the agreement we have with the United States, there is still no plan for it to fund its plaza. However, in our agreement is the following section, and note that the crossing authority is the binational crossing authority where we get toll fares back to pay for it. It is the Canadian money that has been borrowed.

The Crossing Authority shall enter into discussions with the appropriate US Federal Agencies to determine whether and the extent to which US Federal Agencies or the Crossing Authority shall be responsible for one or more of the design, construction, finance and maintenance of the US Federal Plaza.

I raise this because we have not been focused on making sure that our American partners are at the table with us. This crossing has to be done, but it should be done with full partnership.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member about some of the supportive organizations that are so pleased that this government is working toward balancing the budget and that we are very close.

I would like to specifically mention the Canadian Federation of Independent Business because it talks about small-business owners. They recognize that today's deficits are tomorrow's taxes. This is something that in Ontario we have acknowledged since the 1990s. When governments exercise fiscal restraint and prudence, it leads to prosperity in the future.

Organizations like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business have come out and said that they are pleased with our efforts to balance the budget. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has said that "The government has acted.... The result will be a stronger economy and more jobs".

I would like to know what the member from the New Democratic Party would do differently.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, my mother-in-law and father-in-law had a small business; a restaurant. I can tell members that one of the things I would first do is cap those terrible fees on small businesses that the banks with the credit cards are costing them. It is unreasonable.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Oh, that is ridiculous.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** No, Mr. Speaker, it is not ridiculous. The member is saying that it is ridiculous, but it is not.

Those fees are costing small business a significant amount of revenue at the expense of the consumer and the business. Some businesses actually encourage people not to use their credit cards because it costs them more. That is a fact. It is a reality.

The banks are doing well enough, but they are also getting corporate tax cuts right now. So if we are in a deficit still, according to the Conservative government, then we are still borrowing money to pay for corporate taxes because we do not have a surplus.

That is wrong. That is what I would change.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, I will focus on the reaction of my constituents to this non-budget tabled by the "sinister" Minister of Finance. Clearly, the government's intent was to go after the middle class and the working class—our country's workforce and the pillars of our economy—in order to actually destroy Canada's social fabric. This social fabric,

woven by our predecessors, great prime ministers and people from across Canada, from coast to coast to coast, who have worked tirelessly for decades to uphold the fundamental rights—

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Essex is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Mr. Speaker, I would like clarification.

I thought I heard the member refer to the Minister of Finance as the "Sinister of Finance". That is totally unparliamentary behaviour. I wonder if we could maybe have that checked and, if that is the case, if we could have an apology.

● (1220)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The chair appreciates the point of order, and I would remind all hon. members that in this place they are to refer to their colleagues either by their riding or by their office and to refrain from taking those titles or names of ridings and using them in a disparaging way.

The hon. member for Compton—Stanstead.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to my colleagues. I misspoke and I apologize. What I said was inappropriate. Thank you for the reminder.

However, what is going on right now is a national catastrophe. The Conservatives show no regard for the environment. They ignore climate change and have absolutely no use for science. Now, they are targeting people and workers all across Canada. That is unacceptable. Perhaps that is why I got carried away and misspoke.

GDP growth has been going down after each budget, year after year. Why? Because the government is not thinking about stimulating the economy. It has not developed the framework and the environment needed to stimulate and diversify Canada's economy. That is evident everywhere, especially in the rural regions. Rural regions are doing especially poorly, since the government has abandoned the pioneering sectors that helped build our country, such as forestry and agriculture. Furthermore, it is cutting employment insurance, a program that is meant to be there during tough times, when people are transitioning between jobs. Once again, from coast to coast, rural economies are in jeopardy because the government is not supporting workers during these transitional periods.

*The Budget*

We currently have \$618 billion of national debt. We had a \$20 billion surplus and now, over the past few years, we have had a \$60 billion deficit. Debt has increased by nearly \$130 billion in recent years. That is unacceptable. This has all happened at the expense of public services. The government has cut essential services for veterans, employment insurance and social housing, which is essential in our urban communities. Not necessarily in rural areas, but certainly in urban areas. The government has also completely ignored public transit. I think members can understand why some ministers are considered as sinister. I apologize, but it is what it is. That is what people are telling me. They are disappointed. They seriously think that this is a violation of their rights and freedoms. Why? Because 39% of people voted for this government, which means that 61% of the people who voted in the 2011 election did not vote for this government. When the time comes to draft a budget and create programs to stimulate the economy, the government abandons people.

We have talked more than once about the need to address the high costs that retailers pay banks to process credit card transactions, as my colleague who spoke before me mentioned. The only thing the government can come up with is to hold consultations to determine the best way to disclose these costs.

What we want are much stricter, more draconian measures to fight these practices that are costing consumers because the costs are passed down to them after all. Again, if the government wants to stimulate the retail economy then it will have to address these costs one of these days.

I was talking about workers' rights earlier. Cutting the public service, the services that Canadians are entitled to, by attacking the pay and benefits that have been negotiated over the past few decades is an affront.

• (1225)

It is no wonder that occupational illnesses are on the rise, especially in the public service. The workplace is no longer healthy. It has become unbearable, including for some employment insurance officers who are under pressure because of quotas that are forcing them to attack people who are entitled to benefits. These measures are hindering tourism, agriculture, culture and sports in the regions. It is unbelievable.

On the topic of transport, infrastructure and communities, need I mention the Lac-Mégantic tragedy to explain how important rail safety is to the people in my region? Again yesterday, a group stood up to Transport Canada to denounce its ineptitude at dealing with the infractions committed by private companies. It is inaction.

In the past three years, there was a tremendous number of infractions in my region, and no one ever did anything about it. There was a three-foot stretch of track that had not been repaired in two years. A month before the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, there was a spill that caused environmental damage. A month later, tragedy struck.

It is irresponsible and unacceptable for an industrialized country that is a member of the G7 and the G20 to table such a budget, given that the railway sector supports economic development across Canada. The government literally could not care less about rail

safety. People living next to railway tracks are scratching their heads and wondering when the next tragedy will strike.

Well, there was already one in New Brunswick a few months ago, and we knew that would happen. All the players reviewing the Lac-Mégantic tragedy were certain that another tragedy would occur in that part of the country. People were abandoned.

It is the government's responsibility to make sure that private and public railways are safe. However, there is still nothing in this budget to protect my constituents. It is unacceptable.

I will quickly mention the government's interference in health and education. The only thing the provinces have always asked for is the money owed to them. It is up to them to decide where and how to invest it. They have this right under the Constitution. The NDP reaffirmed this right in the Sherbrooke declaration. We are the only ones to guarantee that right.

The government has abandoned agriculture, food safety and the environment, just to name a few areas. There is no mention of climate change or environmental concerns.

To conclude, Canadians deserve much better than this government, which is completely out of touch with the realities and needs of the people. If Canadians want to support the development of a just society and a prosperous economy, they must vote for the NDP in 2015.

• (1230)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that there were no initiatives in the budget related to the environment.

I am holding a copy of budget 2014, the economic action plan, here in my hands, and I am wondering if the member is aware of the initiatives to sustain Canada's national parks; to conserve recreational fisheries, one of my favourites that I will be thinking about a little bit later; to encourage donations of ecologically sensitive land; to improve recreational trails; and to expand tax support, for example, for clean energy generation. These are all very clear and concrete environmental initiatives.

Perhaps the member has not come to page 160, but I would suggest that if he has not, he read that part, because it includes these very concrete measures to improve Canada's environment. I am just wondering if he has seen these ones.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Mr. Speaker, of course I saw those measures, but they were pretty insignificant and not at all proactive. Polluters are under no obligation to take responsibility for spills or environmentally destructive activities. Major polluters are not responsible at all.

The government is using tax credits to provide billions in subsidies to the mining and oil industries. When those industries leave Quebec's far north a few years later, they leave behind sites that need to be decontaminated. The companies that make the messes leave the country or go into hiding. The first nations are fed up with all these contaminated sites. Major polluters do not take any responsibility at all.

*The Budget*

[English]

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of the environment, I noticed that the words “climate change” do not even exist in the budget document. I notice that the Conservatives have spent millions on the National Energy Board to help us get fossil fuels to market more efficiently. I notice that there are more subsidies for promoting offshore oil and gas facilities. Yet I notice that there is nothing about renewable energy such as the eco-energy retrofit program that has been sought.

I wonder if those are the sorts of things the member was talking about. I wonder if he could elaborate on the government's environmental commitments as reflected in the budget document.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Mr. Speaker, this shows the extent to which the government is thumbing its nose at research, innovation and science. It has cut geological departments even though we have a flourishing mining industry. It fired vast numbers of scientists working for Environment Canada and geological services. Now the government is trying to convince me that it cares about the environment.

Unfortunately, the budget does not even mention climate change. We already know that some crops can no longer be grown in some parts of Canada because of climate change, so the government will have a very hard time convincing me that it is taking meaningful action on the environment. It is just not true.

[English]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saannich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, to cast some light on what was said earlier by my friend from Mississauga South, one must remember that in the 2012 budget, Parks Canada was cut by 10%. That has been a significant, really deep, and devastating cut to Parks Canada's capacity. All the scientific work in Parks Canada has ended because all the scientists have been laid off.

One of the consequences of these deep cuts across Canada has been that Parks Canada's infrastructure is crumbling. The money in the budget for Parks Canada, which I am glad to see, it is not to protect national parks but to protect Canadians who are trying to drive through national parks. It is to repair the roads, the bridges, and existing dams. There is nothing new in the budget to repair the damage done to Parks Canada in previous budgets.

• (1235)

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Mr. Speaker, Parks Canada used to be a source of national pride from coast to coast. There are national parks in my riding. People were proud to work there. It was a flourishing industry for tourism and economic development in many regions of the country. Now the government is abandoning that sector, that source of national pride. Once again, that is unacceptable. It will take years to repair the damage that the Conservatives have done over the past nine years. In 2015, people will have to take action and elect an NDP government.

[English]

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure and honour today to speak to the budget. I

will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette.

I have been reading the budget and making a few notes, and there are a couple of highlights I would like to flag not just for members of the House, but also for my constituents back home in Mississauga South who will benefit from the budget.

I realize that not many viewers are watching because everyone is probably rivetted to the Canadian men's Olympic hockey game that is going on right now. This budget reflects the excitement that many Canadians are feeling about the Olympics and about the hockey game.

The captain of our team for budget 2014, the hon. Minister of Finance, has stickhandled the budget once again. This is his 10th budget and he has once again done a great job. With over one million new jobs created since the worst of the recession, I am very proud at how the Minister of Finance has dealt with this.

I appreciate that those who are not watching the hockey game are listening to me. I would like to tell the House about a couple of things that are important to me, my constituents, and all Canadians. I would like to continue on the theme of the environment, which we have been talking a bit about today. This issue is of great importance in the riding of Mississauga South.

I have had some experience with recreational fisheries in working with Credit Valley Conservation. It has done a wonderful job in restoring the wetlands in the Rattray Marsh area of Lake Ontario in south Mississauga, and I thank it for that.

I also want to thank the Minister of Finance for renewing the recreational fisheries community partnerships program. An additional \$15 million will be provided over two years to extend this partnership program. My colleague across the way will also probably highlight this program but I wanted to mention it because people sometimes do not know that urban areas also benefit from these types of programs.

My riding, which is situated on beautiful Lake Ontario and has the Credit River running through it, has been able to benefit from this program and leverage double the funds as a result. We have been able to help restore the Rattray Marsh wetlands. As I said earlier, in concrete ways we are actually helping the environment, and that is a big deal to me.

In terms of the environment and families, I am quite proud that the budget recognizes the Earth Rangers Foundation. This organization is dedicated to educating children and families about biodiversity and empowers them to become directly involved in protecting animals and their habitats. It is an organization that operates across Canada. I have seen the work it does in the GTA. I am particularly pleased that economic action plan 2014 would provide \$3 million over three years to support and expand the existing family oriented conservation and biodiversity programs of the Earth Rangers Foundation.



*The Budget*

I would like to switch gears for a moment. I am not sure if the House is aware that I had the honour to chair a special parliamentary standing committee on missing and murdered aboriginal women. The committee studied violence against aboriginal women in Canada.

● (1240)

This is a huge problem—not just in the aboriginal community—one that all Canadians care deeply about and one that our government is working very hard to erase. That is why I was so proud when I saw that this government is making this a priority by establishing a DNA-based missing persons index or registry. Essentially, we would be using technology to help find these women. We need to use all the tools available to us to solve this very tragic problem. Budget 2014 would provide \$8.1 million over five years to create this DNA-based missing persons index. Once this DNA data bank is established, it will be much easier for the RCMP to continue doing the work it needs to do to find missing women and to identify remains.

While that is very important, I would also like to point out that, related to that, there has been a renewal of \$25 million to address violence against aboriginal women and girls in general. This same pocket of funding actually started in 2010 with \$25 million, so we renewed it in this budget because the five years was almost up. In the last few years, with that funding, the government has made targeted improvements to law enforcement and the justice system, including the creation of a national centre for missing persons and unidentified remains.

The government has also made enhancements to the victims fund to ensure that aboriginal victims and families of missing and murdered aboriginal women have access to culturally appropriate services; and it has supported the development of community-based awareness initiatives, which are very important, as well as safety plans to promote the safety of aboriginal women and girls. These are issues that the committee has been discussing for the past year, almost, and I am delighted that the government has recognized we need to take action. We are putting our money where our mouth is on this issue. As I say, there will be another \$25 million over five years to continue efforts to reduce violence against women; this is an issue that all Canadians care about.

I was on the phone this morning with a representative of Community Living Mississauga. Her name is Debbie Moffatt. We were talking about the ready, willing, and able initiative, which is mentioned on page 62 of the budget. For people who are not aware, this organization helps people with intellectual disabilities—autism, for example—to gain employment, because people sometimes need a little extra help and a hand up. They are able to become contributing members of society with the help of the Canadian Association for Community Living. I am familiar with the Mississauga branch, which does very good work.

In fact, when we met in my office quite a few months ago, Debbie was telling me about Costco, which is one of the companies that has taken on the ready, willing, and able program. It is having great success in hiring folks through this program. I would like to quote, from the budget, one of the new Costco employees, as a result of this program, who said:

I'm very happy about getting this job, and I'm getting paid an equal wage—and a good one at that. I look forward to being part of a team and not being treated any differently—now I can tell my brother, my friends and my mom that I work at Costco!

● (1245)

These are the kinds of things that ready, willing, and able does for folks with intellectual disabilities.

I wanted to talk about supporting women entrepreneurs, but perhaps I can fit that into one of the answers.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about support for the environment. I would like to ask the member a question.

In this budget there is not a single mention of combatting climate change. There is not one mention of what is probably the biggest challenge of our time. We are facing a changing climate. We are seeing the effects not only on our environment but on our communities and local economies, and of course on the national economy.

Climate change is not only the biggest challenge for Canada, but it is in fact one of the biggest challenges in the world. There is not a single mention in this budget. We are passing the buck to future national governments. We are passing the buck to future generations. We are saying that we are not going to deal with it but we are going to let them deal with it.

I do not think that is a responsible way to deal with one of the biggest challenges of our time. I would like to ask the member why there is no mention of climate change in this budget.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Speaker, I fundamentally disagree on how to solve the problem of a cleaner environment.

I believe that we need to take concrete action and that small steps in partnership with community organizations actually solve the problem.

I will not even get into all of our measures related to auto emissions. These are the kinds of things that actually improve air quality. The kinds of things we do for wetland rehabilitation improve water quality. These are the kinds of things that eventually improve quality of life for everyone. I would prefer to take these kinds of measures in partnership with community organizations.

Budget 2014 talks specifically about conserving Canada's natural heritage. It talks not just about the recreational fisheries but about expanding tax relief for environmental conservation of lands, encouraging clean generation, and providing tax relief for green technologies as well.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I could not help but notice the hockey analogy that my colleague from the Conservative side made about the finance minister, about his being really good at stick handling this most recent budget.

I wonder if the member recalls when, in 2011, the Prime Minister talked about how he was going to put in place a firm policy on income splitting after the deficit was eliminated, probably around now. We saw it on television last night.

*The Budget*

I also notice that the finance minister seems to now have some serious reservations about income splitting, although he was very silent on it for four years. Continuing with the hockey analogy, do you not think that perhaps the finance minister has just scored in his own goal?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** I am not sure whether the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie was asking the Chair that question. I would remind all hon. colleagues to direct their questions to the Chair. I presume he was asking the hon. member for Mississauga South.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer that question. Luckily for this House of Commons, we are short on left-wingers and heavy on the right-wingers here in this caucus.

Since 2006, we have provided massive tax relief for Canadian families. As a mother of two, myself, I know that I am proud when I can tell other families and other parents of children in Mississauga South that we have saved the average Canadian family \$3,400 a year in taxes. We have lowered taxes more than 160 times since 2006. It really is amazing. I am so proud of that.

I know that, as we approach balance, we will be considering even more targeted tax measures to help families.

•(1250)

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to follow such an illustrious colleague as the member for Mississauga South. To pick up on her excellent comments, I would like to talk first on the issue of returning to a balanced budget.

Let us go back a few years. Prior to the recession, when the Conservative government took office, we paid down \$37 billion of debt. That was a remarkable achievement. It allowed Canada to be very well prepared when the recession of 2008 hit. It allowed us to launch one of the largest infrastructure programs in Canadian history.

We deliberately went into a deficit of \$55.6 billion at that point. However, we have a Prime Minister and a Minister of Finance who know what they are doing and who had a game plan to stimulate the Canadian economy at that time and then return to a balanced budget over time. That is exactly what has happened. It is exactly as predicted. The deficit this year will be in the range of \$2.9 billion, and next year the surplus is expected to hit \$6.4 billion.

I would like to give a little lesson to my NDP friends across the way on why eliminating the deficit is important. Why is a balanced budget important? It means that less taxpayer money is needed to pay interest on the debt. It helps keep interest rates low for Canadian families. Taxes are kept low. It signals stability to the rest of the world. It attracts investment to Canada, leading to a higher standard of living. It gives the government more flexibility to invest in and support job creation programs.

A balanced budget avoids the instability and draconian cuts seen in other parts of the world, such as Greece. As a grandparent myself, I see it avoids burdening our children and grandchildren with our debts. That is very important.

Our fiscal situation is the envy of the entire world. Canada's net debt is expected to remain the lowest by far of any G7 country.

Japan's debt is incredible. Its net debt is 150% of its GDP, whereas Canada's is in the neighbourhood of about 35% to 40%. We have the lowest by far. That means Canada is in a very good position to weather any economic storms that might occur.

That is the big picture of what the budget would do for the entire country. Being a rural MP representing a large, remote, rural constituency, I tend to look at things through a rural lens. When I look at the measures for rural Canada in this budget, it is very clear to me that rural Canadians would be very well taken of by the government.

We have strong rural representation right across this caucus and right across the country. Approximately 65% of Canada's rural seats are held by Conservatives. Rural Canadians place their trust in us.

Let us talk about some of the measures. In western Canada, we now have livestock price insurance to mitigate risk for livestock producers. There is rural broadband expansion, with \$305 million allocated. This has been wildly popular in my constituency, as I hear through phone calls and emails, and right across the country.

Let us talk about what the farm leadership is saying about our expansion of fast, reliable Internet across rural and remote areas of Canada. This is a quote from Mark Wales, an Elgin farmer and president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. He says that is a huge boon for farmers and small-town entrepreneurs, who will finally be able to do business in a way other Canadians take for granted. It is something they have been calling for, for a long time: full Internet service, much improved.

That is a promise made and a promise kept; end of story.

The growing forward program is continuing along. It has been a very successful program for agriculture right across the country.

Living next to a national park, as I do, almost right next to a national park, I was delighted to see the \$390 million allocated to improving and protecting national park infrastructure. I would like to say to the constituents who are listening that I have already made my request known for what I would like to see happen.

*The Budget*

•(1255)

I want to talk about a program that the member for Mississauga South referred to, the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program. It has been increased. It started off as a \$10 million program. It is now \$15 million. It has been wildly successful. Last year, that program funded almost 100 fisheries conservation projects right across this country in partnership with dedicated angling conservation groups. That is true environmentalism. We do not just talk about the environment or about process; we actually get out there and do things on the ground to fix the problems that people see.

I would gladly debate that with anyone on the other side who talks about the environment. All they talk about is process, but we get things done. The Sydney tar ponds are being fixed up. Others include the Lake Simcoe watershed and Hamilton Harbour. It goes on and on. Problems are being dealt with. I defy any members opposite to name any environmental indicator in this country that has become worse on our watch. They are all getting better on our watch.

Let us talk about the interest-free loans for apprenticeships.

There is a labour shortage in my constituency. We have a booming oil industry, a burgeoning oil industry. We have a forestry industry. We need workers in the skilled trades. Our interest-free loan program for apprentices would fill that gap.

We have a major tourism industry in my constituency and across the country, and there is now \$10 million allocated for recreational trails.

There is a \$90 million investment for the forest industry. It is called the forest industry transformation program.

There is a national disaster mitigation program. We all know about the disastrous 2011 floods that Manitoba experienced, as well as the floods that occurred a couple of years ago in Alberta.

There is a Canada First Research Excellence Fund. As a person who represents an agricultural constituency, I take a keen interest in biotechnology and agricultural research. It is because of our government's funding of high-class research and of scientists that Canada's agriculture is and will continue to be world class.

Here is a nice little program that I think all members will agree with, our little program to remove red tape from the beer industry. There is a small microbrewery in my constituency that is starting to emerge. Members may have seen it on *Dragon's Den* a few weeks ago. The beer is called Farmery beer. There are two young lads who started this brand of beer. They were on *Dragon's Den*. They are neighbours and constituents of mine. I am so very proud of Chris and Lawrence Warwaruk and their Farmery beer.

That is a free commercial for those guys, and it is worth it. I am looking for great things to happen for them. I urge all members to try this beer if they have a chance. They should.

•(1300)

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** Sure. Can you bring me some?

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Mr. Speaker, I will gladly do that. In the spirit of non-partisanship, I will gladly bring colleagues beer.

I guess that is in *Hansard* now, forever. They can quote me. That is okay.

Let us talk about the laughable economic policies of the NDP for a minute. I have a list.

The facts of life are Conservative: free markets work, deficit reduction works, merit-based societies work, private property works, economic freedom works, free trade works, and wealth creation is critical to fund social programs.

What is the NDP's toxic ideology? Its members do not support free markets, they are suspicious of private property, and their cure for everything is more spending. They think we can spend ourselves rich. They are suspicious of business people and entrepreneurs and they thrive on a culture of envy. A dirty little secret about the New Democrats is that they want people to become dependent on government because they think it is in their own political interest.

With that, I will sit down and take questions.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my friend's discourse just moments ago. I note that there was a 400-page document in which the words "climate change" did not appear. There were five pages dealing with national parks, but they dealt mostly with the repaving of highways and \$10 million for snowmobile trails, which I presume is the government's environmental policy.

I am indebted to *iPolitics* for this nugget: the Minister of the Environment went on Twitter on budget day and talked only about transportation, making people wonder if she is still the Minister of the Environment. However, there was an indirect reference to climate change that may have been missed. It was pointed out in other articles, which said that at least the Conservatives understood that unregulated economic development and providing hundreds of millions in subsidies for industrial development does require hundreds of millions for train crashes and infrastructure relief in disasters, so presumably they do understand but do not connect the dots.

I ask my colleague this question: has the government entirely given up on the environment?

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for that question, because it gives me an opportunity to illustrate what I said earlier about the NDP's lack of knowledge about the environment itself.

*The Budget*

We have instituted the national areas conservation plan, through which 800,000 acres have been conserved. We have 1,400 habitat projects under the habitat stewardship program. Canada has been a participant since 1986 in the North American waterfowl management plan, which is a wetland conservation program. These measures are important for climate change mitigation.

The member opposite should realize something about the protection and restoration of natural areas, wetlands in particular. They are carbon sinks, and when we create wetlands and restore wetlands we do more than just one thing. Sure, we sequester carbon, but we also protect biodiversity, we improve flood control, and we recharge aquifers.

This government implements concrete programs that actually do things for the environment. They have multiple benefits and, yes, they will mitigate climate change.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about having 65% of rural MPs. What do the Conservatives do? They certainly have not spoken up for rural Canada. They certainly have not. They do their trick. They stand up to say “yea” when they are asked to. We would call that—well, maybe I had better not use that kind of language in this House.

The member claims he is defending rural Canadians, and he is from western Canada. Well, right now in western Canada, 53 ships are sitting empty in the Port of Vancouver. Grain prices have been discounted by some 40%. Farmers cannot get their grain to market. The reason they cannot is that the current government, the government the member is a part of and the government that he said “yea, yea, yea” to, failed, when it killed the Canadian Wheat Board, to realize all the logistics carried out by the Canadian Wheat Board.

Now it has a crisis on its hands that the backbench members in that party are responsible for, and that is one of the reasons rural Canadians in the west are finding it difficult in the agriculture sector at the moment.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the member's comments about the rail situation. He is actually right, from the standpoint that it needs to be fixed. We have a bottleneck now. The biggest problem is that last year the farmers basically harvested a crop and a half, and the system simply could not stand it. However, the best Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in the world, our minister, is on this case and is working extremely hard.

Let us talk about defending rural Canada. Rural Canada hated the Liberals' long gun registry. Just recently, the Liberal Party put on its website, for its upcoming convention, a proposal to reduce firearms ownership in this country along Australian lines. That would get rid of 90% of the hunting firearms in Canada.

Yes, the Liberals really defend rural Canada, do they not?

• (1305)

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

I would say that I am pleased to speak to the budget, but I am disappointed at the uselessness of the Minister of Finance's document in dealing with the problems many Canadians face and

at the absolute failure of this minister and the government to put Canada on a footing for economic growth.

This book, *Creating Jobs and Opportunities*, is basically a piece of fiction. Yes, there is a little tinkering and a little programming there, but it does nothing to deal with the big-picture items of creating economic growth, really creating jobs broadly, and unifying the country from coast to coast with a vision for economic development. In fact, in the budget the Conservatives are in many ways splitting the country asunder.

I will quote from an editorial article in today's *Guardian*. Everybody in this House would know that *The Guardian* covers the island like the dew.

The article states:

It's not often that any finance minister will try and camouflage a balanced budget while preferring to take credit for a small deficit. A sheepish Minister of Finance did his best Tuesday to convince Canadians this was the case but really fooled no one. This budget is, for all intents and purposes, balanced.

The federal finance minister prefers to speak those sacred words next year, an election year.

It goes on from there.

That is the context of the budget: setting the stage for partisan purposes to try to regain election next year, and that is irresponsible on the part of a government. A government's responsibility is to govern for all Canadians, and the government has failed in that responsibility. A government's responsibility is to plan and implement policies that benefit all Canadians, and a government's responsibility is clearly to deal with some of the issues out there at the moment, issues that came with the Conservatives' previous budget and that some of their previous policy decisions created. Many Canadians are hurting as a result of those issues.

In my area in particular, and I have spoken about it several times in this House, one of the greatest areas that has caused hurt, split families, and hurt communities is the employment insurance changes. Yes, the government has the authority to make changes, but it should make them in a way that would contribute to the economy, not undermine it.

The employment insurance changes have affected seasonal industries and our seasonal workers very negatively. Because of the clawbacks, they have less income than they had the previous year. Businesses cannot get workers because the timeframe has been set such that people's is being clawed back. As a result, there is a very serious negative impact on three of our major industries in Prince Edward Island: agriculture, fisheries, and tourism. That is a result of the EI changes.

The budget especially failed my province of Prince Edward Island, but it is not only P.E.I. The unilateral decisions taken by the Minister of Finance failed the other provinces as well.

*The Budget*

I picked up an article in *Inside Policy*, a magazine of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute. The article is by Stanley Hartt, who used to be a well-known deputy minister in Ottawa. The headline reads:

Budget making process requires provinces, feds to understand each others' goals and intentions

• (1310)

It goes on to talk about federal-provincial jurisdiction in this country and the need to work together to build a stronger Canada, that each sector has implications for the other and that they have to work together on the economy especially, building policies that would in fact strengthen the economy from coast to coast to coast. In that area, the current government has failed terribly. The Conservatives do not communicate with the provinces. They do not cooperate with the provinces. They unilaterally make decisions that download costs on the provinces, that change programs in the provinces and, in fact, can negatively affect those provinces' economies.

That is what happened with EI previously. However, in this one it was bad enough that the Government of Canada pushed the Canada job grant, actually spending \$2.4 million in false advertising. The minister knew the provinces opposed it and yet he went ahead and put in place the Canada job grant, albeit somewhat changed after discussions with them.

However, for Prince Edward Island, this would replace a \$2.1 million labour market agreement that was used for employment assistance for businesses and the unemployed. Folks who worked in that system were just transferred from HRSDC a few years ago, when it was a federal program, and downloaded to the provinces. The money was given to the provinces and they were to be in charge of labour market development. Now they find that the whole program will be changed unilaterally by the federal government against their wishes.

Additionally, in terms of Prince Edward Island, the government unilaterally eliminated the immigrant investor program. I spoke to people at the government level yesterday. There was not a word of discussion. That program is very important to the economy, very important for us to attract people into the province. It was just cancelled like that and a new program came into place. There was absolutely no consultation.

For many retired public servants, veterans, and RCMP in Prince Edward Island, the tax grab of increasing the cost of health benefits would be almost criminal. Retirees paid into those plans in good faith and felt that their retirement was secure, but retroactively changing the rules as the Conservatives plan to do is absolutely wrong. They are trying to balance the books on the backs of public servants, veterans, RCMP, and others who worked their lifetime securing their retirement, and now the Conservatives will increase their health premiums.

Moreover, while the Conservatives are claiming in this document, this so-called budget, that they just deferring their military procurement, it should be seen as nothing other than a cut. For Prince Edward Island, shipbuilding in Georgetown would certainly be affected, undermining our economy and possibly creating a loss

of jobs. What will happen to shipbuilding in Halifax, which was a huge program, we do not know.

Furthermore, the government has failed to ensure that major industries like agriculture are on a competitive footing with other countries like the United States. President Obama signed the U.S. farm bill last week, with \$1 trillion over 10 years for its industry, enshrining in legislation country-origin labelling that has already cost our beef industry about \$5 billion. Yet, this Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food will cut programs. So we are not even on a competitive footing any more. The bottom line is that the current government will even create divisions in agriculture as a result of the budget. The Conservatives aim to put in place a price-support insurance program, but only for western farmers, with nothing for the backbenchers here in Ontario or Atlantic Canada. Do they not know that we have a livestock industry right across this country? Our livestock producers deserve that price-insurance program as well.

In conclusion, the budget is an absolute failure in ensuring economic growth and meeting the needs of Canadians.

• (1315)

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I find it pretty rich coming from that member of Parliament from the Liberal Party to talk about our government downloading costs. He was a member of that government, which downloaded \$25 billion onto the provinces. He was a member of that government, which took \$57 billion out of the EI fund. He was a member of the government under the decade of darkness, which starved our military and sent them to Afghanistan in green uniforms. My goodness, where has that guy been living?

I would like to ask the member to reconsider his thoughts on what we are doing to help Canadians. We have created over one million jobs since the recession. We are coming to a balanced budget. The member should also remember that it was his party under Pierre Elliott Trudeau who took the country down into the depths of deficits year after year.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Speaker, oh my gosh, are we really going back that far? The current government and the Mulroney government have added so much to the deficit. Since the government came to power it has added \$169 billion to the deficit. The finance minister should be called "deficit" because that is what he has produced.

If the member wants to talk about what the previous Liberal government did, I was proud to be a part of it. We balanced the books. We had nine surpluses. We turned over a \$13 billion surplus to the current government, which blew it in a matter of time. We had the biggest health accord in Canadian history. We put in place the infrastructure programs for this country. We increased research and development. We improved the education system across Canada through scholarships. I am running out of time, but the list is a lot longer.

That member should stand and say "thank you, former Liberals, for what you have done to this country because you gave us a foundation", but which the current government has undermined.

*The Budget*

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear quite a bit of passion in the House.

I would like to turn back to the budget and ask about funding dedicated to something that is important to my riding in British Columbia, the Pacific salmon. There is no mention of what the government is putting toward salmon. The government spent \$26 million on the Cohen inquiry, an inquiry that I think was needed and for which I lauded the government in 2009. That inquiry listened to hundreds of interventions and witnesses, thousands of submissions, and produced 75 good recommendations that are worthy of attention. Yet, in the budget, there is not a single dime being put toward those recommendations.

What does the member think of a budget that does not dedicate any funding toward something in the government has already invested \$26 million in?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is that it is absolutely shameful. The government does a lot of tinkering and has a certain number of pet peeves and is trying to cater to a certain area. Conservatives do not govern for the country as a whole.

In terms of Pacific salmon, I understand that industry relatively speaking. I used to be chair of the fisheries committee and toured the salmon industry in western Canada. It is a very important economic contributor.

The report is a good one. Those recommendations would build that salmon economy in the west for the future, but the Conservatives ignored it. They did not look at it, which is an absolute shame. But the problem is that there are so many other areas they did not look at either.

I should make one point on broadband because we heard a lot about that from the other side. The CEO of Xplornet, Allison Lenehan, expressed concern about the announcement of a federal broadband program in the budget this way: “We are concerned that the government may be trying to fix a problem that does not exist.... The only thing standing between rural Canadians and faster speeds now and in the future is spectrum, not funding and not technology”.

I ask the government to take note of that statement that maybe the problem is not funding but getting spectrum to the right company.

• (1320)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to express a few thoughts on what I believe is one of the most lacklustre budgets introduced in the House of Commons for many years.

I cannot help but reflect on what the leader of Liberal Party has talked much about over the last 12 months, the importance of the middle class. That is something that Liberals believe the government has been negligent on. We have seen, and continue to see, a growing gap in economic benefits for the hard-working middle class compared to the elite in Canada. The government needs to start focusing more attention on improving the conditions of our middle class. This is where the government has fallen short again.

I am concerned that the government seems to be more interested in the politics of budgets than the practicality of the benefits of having a solid budget, even in-between elections. It seems to be

more focused on wanting to deliver the big punch, possibly in next year's budget, at a substantial cost to Canada's economy this year. Ultimately, the government talks about a balanced budget, but it is all talk because the government has not delivered a balanced budget. The government talks about it, but does not necessarily understand the best way to achieve a balanced budget.

Let me highlight something, because we have very limited time to share our concerns regarding the budget. I would like to look at the bigger picture. In this budget the government is highlighting its attempt to reach budgetary balance. We need to recognize that when the Conservative government took the reins of power, when Paul Martin was prime minister of Canada, he handed over a multi-billion dollar surplus. This Conservative-Reform government turned that multi-billion dollar surplus into a multi-billion dollar deficit. That was even before the recession.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Nonsense. That is not true.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that is the truth. They might not like it, but it is the truth.

That is the Conservatives' financial management.

What about the economy? Well, one of the biggest driving forces we have for jobs today is small business. We need to invest in small businesses. We need to encourage growth within those industries.

One of the ways we can tell whether Canada is doing well economically is to look at our trade with other countries. To do that, let us again go back to Paul Martin when he was prime minister. He handed the Conservative government a multi-billion dollar trade surplus. The Liberal Party has a long history of being progressive in achieving good trade agreements. One of the most successful ones was back in the 1960s with the automobile industry. We have a long record of recognizing the value and importance of international trade.

What did the Conservatives do, even though they talk about the trade agreements they are signing? The Conservatives took that healthy multi-billion dollar trade surplus and turned it into a trade deficit of billions of dollars. What does that mean? We are talking about tens of thousands of jobs that have been denied.

When one wants to balance the books one needs to take a different approach.

• (1325)

The approach the Conservative government is taking today is not the approach the Liberal Party of Canada would take. We believe in Canadians. We believe in small business. We recognize that the best way to balance the books is through the promotion of growth in the economy. If the economy grows, so does government revenue, and there is a reduction in dependency on government programs that cost money.

The key thing here is to encourage and develop good, solid, sound policies that encourage growth to take place. If we are successful, the economy will grow. That is the way the Liberal Party would manage the budget.

*The Budget*

We believe in Canadians. We believe in the middle class. It is the middle class that can make things happen. Instead of putting more of a burden on the middle class, we believe we should lighten its load and support it.

I will give a specific example.

The region of the country I represent is in the Prairies. I am a very proud prairie boy. It has been very sad what we have witnessed among the wheat farmers over the last number of months. Imagine tonnes of wheat piled in steel bins. Sadly, many of those piles are now in fields, because the bins are full.

We produce the best wheat in the world, but the farmers are not able to get that wheat out to the Pacific coast, where we have dozens of ships sitting empty. It is a huge cost. It is tens of millions of dollars. It has even been suggested that it has gone into the hundreds of millions of dollars. I would suggest that it is possibly larger than that, if we look at the depreciated value of the wheat as a direct result of some of the incompetence of the Conservative government.

This should not be any surprise. We knew that the wheat had to be transported months ago. What has the government done? Nothing. I think a couple of months ago, there was a commitment of \$1 million, which is absolutely nothing. The Government of Canada has failed the prairie farmers. I say shame on the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Someone said that we had the best minister of agriculture in the world. What a joke. I think they should have a plebiscite on that issue in the Prairies. He might get 1% who might agree with that, but I can say that the vast majority of farmers in western Canada would never say something of that nature. If we want to narrow it down to the wheat and canola farmers, we would find it difficult to find anyone who would agree with that statement.

Our prairie farmers need support from the government, and they need that support today. What does the budget do? It gives absolutely nothing. What does the Minister of Finance have to say about it? Absolutely nothing. It is not even addressed in the budget.

I have a litany of things I want to talk about. One of the issues from coast to coast to coast in Canada is health care. The Conservative government has done nothing in regard to renewing the health care accord. This is something Paul Martin put in place. It was good for 10 years, and it expires this year. It is worth billions of dollars.

The government takes credit for the increases in health care, but it was not the Conservatives that did that. It was the Liberal Party of Canada that was responsible for the billions of dollars of increases in health care. The Conservative government is doing nothing to ensure that the health care accord is renewed. Every Canadian from coast to coast to coast believes in our health care, and they want the government to deliver on this issue.

My challenge to the government is to rethink its budget and present something that is more saleable to all Canadians.

• (1330)

**Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have certainly come to

expect that kind of overheated rhetoric from the third party. That is one of the reasons it is relegated to that end of the chamber.

I would like to ask the member a factual question. Does he not recognize that there has been a 6% escalator since this government took office in 2006? We have seen the Canada health transfer go from \$19 billion. By 2016, we should see it at almost \$40 billion. That is something we have honoured, unlike his party during the 1990s. When it attempted to balance the deficit, it cut into transfers. It downloaded onto the provinces.

Does he not understand that the numbers speak for themselves and that the way this finance minister seeks to balance our books is by taking a completely different direction than that member? Does he recognize the hypocrisy in his statements?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, there is no hypocrisy whatsoever. It was Jean Chrétien who changed the tax points transfer system for health care. Under Brian Mulroney, there eventually would have been zero dollars transferred to health care, because it would have all been tax points. It was Jean Chrétien who established guaranteed funding for health care, and then it was Paul Martin who ensured that we had the health care accord, which has given us the amount of money that is going to health care today.

The Conservatives had nothing, zip, to do with the amount of money going toward health care today. It is the health care accord that achieved the goals he just referenced. It is that health care accord that needs to be renewed so provinces can continue to receive the necessary funds for the health care Canadians want and deserve.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know that Canadians watching would much rather talk about the reality of this budget than about who was at fault in the past for what happened. On this side of the House, we are going to talk about this budget for the afternoon, if we can.

I want to ask a question that the hon. member for Malpeque raised, which is the notion of balancing the budget on the backs of whom. I would ask the member if he would agree with *The Globe and Mail*, in its coverage of this budget, that the Conservatives significantly hiking the premiums for retired civil servants, more than doubling them for individual coverage, would mean that retirees would now have to pay 50% of the cost of their health benefits. It is a point also made by the member for Malpeque. *The Globe and Mail* reports that this would mean that, for instance, a former government employee would see his or her annual premiums paid into the plan rise to \$550 from \$261. That is almost a \$300-a-month addition for people who are living on fixed incomes. I wonder if that is the way we are balancing this budget—on the backs of retired public servants.

I would ask my hon. friend for his comments on that issue.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, it is a good question. I would add to it by saying that it is somewhat ironic. There has been a great discussion and debate on the issue of the cuts being imposed on veterans. The health benefits for civil servants also apply to veterans. It is an issue of priorities. Are we trying to balance a budget on some of those cuts? It is the wrong way to go.

*The Budget*

I have tabled petitions on how the government, and I must say that the NDP is supportive of this, is increasing the number of parliamentarians. There will be more politicians added to the House of Commons. If we were to canvass, we would find two things. The first is that people appreciate the benefits and services they get and do not want those cut back, whether it is increasing the age of retirement from 65 to 67 or decreasing health benefits, something individuals would have paid for while they were in the federal civil service. They do not want that sort of thing to take place. They also do not believe that the government is correct in increasing the number of members of Parliament in the House of Commons.

• (1335)

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, before I start, I would like to mention that I will be splitting my time with the member for Burlington. I know that I am looking forward to hearing his comments. He always does such a great job when he addresses the House. We will have to wait just a few minutes to hear from him. I am also pleased to be joined by my colleague from Richmond Hill.

I have said before that the compass of our government points north, with both purpose and intent, to guide our nation, and indeed the world, to a land that is diverse with history, heritage, resources, and culture. The contribution of Canada's true north plays a key role in our great country. Revenue resource sharing agreements put in place under our government have assured prosperity both for the territories across the north and the nation.

I will talk about page 140 of budget 2014, where it reinforces this idea. It says:

Canada's North is a fundamental part of our heritage, our future and our identity as a country. Building on the Government's vision for a new North, Economic Action Plan 2014 is taking action to ensure that the North realizes its full potential by exercising our Northern sovereignty, promoting economic prosperity and supporting the health of Northerners.

Let me just highlight a few things that would be specifically beneficial to my riding in the Yukon territory. There would be record transfers of support for social and health services for the Yukon under this budget. The Yukon would receive significant support through major transfer payments this year.

All major federal transfers to provinces and territories would grow from current record levels, totalling \$65 billion in 2014-15. That is an increase of 56% since 2004-06, under the former Liberal government. For the Yukon, the total major transfer would total \$898 million, including \$851 million through the territorial formula financing program. That is an increase of \$350 million since 2005-06, under the previous Liberal government.

We heard the member for Malpeque talking about his glory days. He clearly forgets what the Liberal government was doing with those transfer payments, which was slashing them. He talked about the balanced budgets it had back then. The Liberals balanced their budgets by slashing transfers to provinces and the territories, specifically hitting our territory square between the eyes.

Our Conservative government promised not to do that. We did not do it. In fact, we have hit historic record levels. We have done that, coincidentally, without raising taxes on Canadian families.

Approximately \$33 million would come to our territory through the Canada health transfer. That is an increase of almost \$11 million,

or a 50% increase since the Liberals were at the helm. In addition, \$13 million would come through the Canada social transfer. That is a 36% increase from what the Liberal government gave. As I said, the Liberals balanced their budgets by slashing transfers to the territories and provinces, but they stand in the House bragging about what they did to our provinces and territories way back. It probably was so long ago that not many people can remember it, but it is always worth a refresher as to why the Liberals are sitting in the far corner of the House today.

To keep pace with the needs of Canadians in rural and northern communities, the economic action plan also proposes \$305 million over the next five years to extend and enhance broadband services to a target speed of five megabits per second to support an additional 280,000 Canadian households. That would represent almost universal access.

I can tell members that I consulted across our territory and met with the city chambers, the territorial chambers, industry, small and medium businesses, and families to talk about broadband access and services in my territory. From 2011 to this date, they were asking the government to make a move on it. We have delivered on a strong commitment to give them the broadband access they need. That is going to help our Canadian families, and it will certainly help our businesses grow in our territory. I am proud of our Conservative government for doing that.

Canada's north is blessed with an abundance of natural resources with the potential to fuel northern economic and social development and secure Canada's future prosperity. I have to tell the House that riches in the ground on their own do not guarantee economic success above ground. To realize its potential, the north requires efficient regulatory regimes, a skilled local workforce, low taxes, well-developed infrastructure, and extensive scientific and geological knowledge.

Further, it is important to ensure that northerners have control over development decisions. Successful northern development means jobs and prosperity for northerners themselves. Our government is investing in that infrastructure.

• (1340)

With regard to control over their developmental decisions, we in this House all know that we are moving closer and closer to the devolution agreement with the Northwest Territories, so it can dictate its own future and manage its land and resources with local skills, knowledge, and ability.

I am proud to be part of the committee that has been working on that devolution agreement. I look forward to moving that across the finish line for the great people of the Northwest Territories.

A federal contribution has been made in the past, up to \$71 million, in the Yukon. The Yukon has benefited from the Mayo B hydroelectric facility, which brought electric power to our territory, clean green energy, and is meeting the needs of a major infrastructure concern for our territory.



*The Budget*

The new building Canada plan that was announced in economic action plan 2013 includes \$234 million in the first five years to municipalities and territories, through the renewed and indexed gas tax fund.

We have all heard great news about the permanency and indexing of the gas tax fund from all our municipalities, from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to the small communities in my home territory. They are exceptionally pleased with that. It is allowing communities to dictate their fate and future and identify their plans and priorities, not just for tomorrow but for a much longer term. This is a more flexible gas tax plan, which allows them to utilize those funds in a far different manner.

We have been responsive to their requests. We have been responsive to their needs. We have done that through consultation. Each one of us in this House, as members of Parliament, has an obligation to meet and consult with our constituents. That is part of the government consultation process. Every one of us sitting here needs to go into our communities, to talk with groups and organizations and individuals to find out what their priorities are.

Those priorities are reflected in this budget and in previous budgets. They do not just speak about long-term or one-year plans, but project us well into the future: 2016, 2017, and years beyond. I am glad we are part of a government that not only listens but incorporates things in the budget that are long term, thinking beyond the life of a mandate, thinking long term for Canadians' prosperity.

I am going to run out of time before I get through the stack of notes I have about this budget, but I am sure we are going to have some questions in the House, which I will be more than happy to answer. I certainly hope that some of them come from the Liberal members, so we can reflect on some of the things they have done that have led to where they are, and where we are, today.

However, let me talk a little about our territorial mine training program. The economic action plan announced capital support for additional trades and technical facilities in the Yukon, at the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining. That has been a widely successful program. It is growing.

This year, in this budget, we added a trades loan program for students going into red seal trade programs. That is going to give them an excellent opportunity to access student loans where they have not had that opportunity in the past. Why did we come up with that? It is because that is what we heard from industry, businesses, educational institutions, and chambers. We heard that when consulting with Canadians about what they would need to fill high-demand jobs, to put students and aboriginal and first nations people in our country in the best position to access the highly skilled job opportunities available today.

We responded by making sure that education is accessible, affordable, targeted and focused on those opportunities that exist today. I know my riding in the Yukon Territory is going to be very excited about this.

I could go on about a number of other things that were clearly directed at the Yukon, and I will touch on a couple of them that are important. One was our government's reinvestment in the strategic investments in northern economic development program, through

the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. The Yukon tourism association asked us to renew that program because it is a great way to diversify markets. The minister of tourism for the territorial government specifically said there is an excellent return on investment through the program and that they would like to see it continue. He talked to me specifically about it. He talked directly with our federal counterpart ministers about that. Our government listened and has renewed that program.

I could go on and on, but I know my time is up. I am going to sit down and look forward to some questions from my colleagues in the House.

● (1345)

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the investment in transit infrastructure. Transit is critical in my riding. My riding is growing quickly. Obviously, greater Vancouver is a desirable place to live. Many people are moving to Coquitlam, Port Moody, and New Westminster. One of the biggest issues in my riding is transportation funding. Whether it is about transporting people or goods, it is a concern. Could the minister tell me why there is no dedicated funding for transit infrastructure in the Lower Mainland, one of the fastest growing regions in Canada?

The Conservative government refuses to develop a national transit strategy. However, it has recognized the importance of transit, as it promised to invest \$600 million in Toronto's subway system. What about the rest of Canada? What about investing in transit infrastructure in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia?

**Mr. Ryan Leef:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite would know that the entire gas tax fund for the Port Metro area goes exclusively to transportation infrastructure.

The building Canada fund is the largest and longest infrastructure project in Canadian history, and that is going to grow right into 2016.

I did mention in my speech that our government is looking beyond the life of this current mandate. We are projecting and planning to allow for growth in the building Canada fund outside of the term of this mandate because we understand the needs of our infrastructure sector.

The age of Canada's infrastructure now is substantially younger than in previous years. We have newer infrastructure right across this country.

There is one thing I will say quickly to tie this up. The member asked a question about transportation across this country. Our government's investments in the Yukon have been substantial and they are substantial right across this country, and it is largely because of the building Canada fund and the gas tax infrastructures.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the qualities of a great government is its ability, for example, to anticipate a recession, which the Conservative government clearly did not anticipate. The Conservatives did not know quite what to do, until opposition parties told them to stimulate the economy.

*The Budget*

I would like to talk about one other area of anticipation that is important. Surely, everybody recognized last September that an enormous wheat crop had been produced by our western farmers. A competent government would have anticipated that, and it would have ramped up the necessary infrastructure so that a fortune of crop from our western farmers would get to market.

Why did the government get caught sleeping? Why did it not anticipate that much wheat and start to work on getting the infrastructure in place?

**Mr. Ryan Leef:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if my hon. colleague is suggesting that the Government of Canada could have built a railroad in the last eight months.

My colleague from Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette said that we are dealing with this issue. Our government understands that we have to get that grain to market. It was this Conservative government that freed western farmers from a monopoly that allowed farmers in western Canada to market their grain on a free and open market. We are happy that there has been a realization of success. A crop and a half came off the fields this year in western Canada, and we have to find a way to get that crop to market. It is a grave problem and we are going to deal with that problem.

It is irresponsible for the member opposite to suggest that we could have built a railroad in eight months to get that wheat to market.

• (1350)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Yukon for sharing his time with me today. He has done an excellent job, not only today but year-round. I want to thank him for his commitment last summer. He ran around his whole territory on behalf of diabetes disease, which I have. I want to thank him for bringing attention to that disease and for the work he does in that area.

Economic action plan 2014 is a Conservative budget. Is anybody here surprised that it is a Conservative budget? It is conservative as we move toward a balanced approach to our finances in this country. We do not use magic. We do not think books balance themselves. We have a plan. Economic action plan 2014 builds upon the plan that we have had for the years we have been in office.

Before I get into the points in this budget that I think relate very well to Burlington, my home riding, we have heard, through the questions being asked today, about not foreseeing the downturn in the economy. We had the member for Malpeque, as the previous speaker mentioned, on this and that. The Liberal Party took \$60 billion out of the EI fund and reallocated it for its own use. We have the Liberals saying we are running big deficits, and then in the same breath they are talking about adding more.

Where do they think the money comes from? We would have to raise taxes, which we know is what the NDP wants to do, and now it definitely sounds like the Liberals want to do it too. They cannot complain that we have deficits. We are getting those deficits down. We are working very hard to make that happen, and we are almost there. We have another year, and hopefully we will have accomplished that goal.

We did stimulus spending in an appropriate way so that we created jobs in this country. A million jobs have been created since the end of the recession. We have been working hard in those areas.

I am fully aware that the opposition has a role to criticize. It should be criticizing what is in the budget, if it finds things it can do better. However, to criticize us for our actions to get this country back to work, to keep us as the number one economy of all of our partners, is just not accurate. I think it does not do this House or the parties any good.

I will get back to what is in this budget that we have in front of us, in economic action plan 2014.

There are a few things that I would like to highlight. The reason I would like to highlight them is that often there is the impression that a backbencher member of Parliament might not have a tremendous amount of influence. Our finance minister has an open mind and an open door to suggestions about what should be in the budget. There are things in this budget that I have advocated for, either this year or in previous years. Sometimes things do not happen overnight. I know that is hard for people to believe. Sometimes we have to keep advocating for what we believe in.

I want to point out a couple of things in this budget that I have been working on as a member of Parliament on behalf of my constituents that have made it into this budget.

The first one is very personal. I have a daughter who has just graduated from university. I know a number of her colleagues and friends. They are all looking for work. Fortunately for my daughter, she was a co-op student. The co-op has made a big difference in her ability to find employment because she has some experience.

In this budget, the finance minister, in his wisdom and under our Prime Minister, said that this kind of learning, this kind of experience, is what we need for our young people to get ahead, to get a start, and we have put aside \$40 million for 3,000 full-time internships in high-demand jobs. It is exactly what we need to get young people into the workforce and moving forward in their careers.

People may say this sounds silly. I have an open door policy in my office. Year after year, there are two groups of university students, two organizations, that come to see me every year with demands. I do not agree with every one of their demands. Trust me. And I am clear with those young folks that I do not agree with them.

•(1355)

However, one of the items I have agreed with, and I have actually put in a submission to the Minister of Finance, is to not include vehicles in the calculations of student loans. If a student's car were worth \$3,000 or \$5,000, it would go against the value he or she could borrow because it was an asset that we would account for. In this budget, we would eliminate that. There are 19,000 students in this country who drive to school. In my riding of Burlington, we do not have a university main campus. We have a satellite campus for McMaster University in my riding, for MBA students, but we do not have a main campus; so people often drive to McMaster or to Guelph or to college in Oakville or to Toronto. They live at home to save money, and they drive to school every day. This is a request that has come year after year from these organizations. They thought, and I agreed with them, that this is something we should look at. I submitted it to the Minister of Finance last year and this year, and it made the budget. I am very proud that we saw the light that we need to be helping our young people in my area to pay for their education.

There is another area we get criticized on, research and innovation, which is not accurate, but the opposition members like to criticize. In this budget, there would be \$1.5 billion in funding for post-secondary education research. In addition to that, we would give \$46 million to granting councils that grant to individual organizations that do research. Just so people know, they are the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. All three councils would get funding from this \$46 million to carry out research. We have been criticized as being very narrow on what we want to see done in terms of research. We would give a chunk of this \$46 million to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. I am very proud of the work we are doing in that area.

Here is another item that is close to my heart. Ford Canada has its manufacturing plant office in my neighbouring riding of Oakville, and lots of individuals work for Ford, but a lot more individuals work in companies that are suppliers to Ford in my riding. In support of innovation and an understanding that we need to move forward in this industry if we are going to stay ahead of the curve in terms of innovation, we would put forward \$500 million in the innovative automotive sector over two years. That is additional money that automotive companies in this country could use to innovate and do research on the new products they are going to bring to the marketplace.

That is not the only area. We are also looking at what has been working. This is not in my riding, but transformation has been needed in the forestry industry, and we would re-fund to a tune of \$90 million the forest institute transformation fund, which allows forestry companies to look at where they are now and what the future will be in terms of the products and services that need to be provided, and it would give them some funding to help them get there.

Another area is seniors. Seniors make up almost half of my riding. I think a little over 50% of the residents are age 55 and over now. Someone age 55 is not a senior, but that is the statistic I have, and I am getting there. We have a program that helps seniors, and we have been able to deliver a large number of small projects in my riding

### *Statements by Members*

through this program. One example is that we gave \$5,000 to a small organization that helps Polish seniors in my riding to buy computer equipment, so they can have access to the Internet and gain an understanding of it. They were so excited that this money was delivered to them. Our seniors centre has a new kitchen, to be able to provide a breakfast program to shut-in seniors who are not able to get out. Without our providing that money through this seniors program, they would not be out every other Sunday morning. We would re-fund that as a \$5 million per year program, which is excellent for my riding.

•(1400)

I will finish with this. I had a private member's bill eight years ago dealing with a DNA database for missing persons, a missing persons index. It did not make it because it needed royal assent and needed money spent on it, which is not allowed in a private member's bill. Today, in this budget, the DNA-base missing persons databank will come to fruition. I thank the minister and the Prime Minister for their foresight on that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The time for government orders has expired. The questions and comments period for the hon. member for Burlington will take place when this matter returns, perhaps after question period.

Statements by members, the hon. member for York Centre.

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Finance is not the only one who brought home gold this week. We are also celebrating the tremendous achievements of our Olympic athletes in Sochi, Russia.

To celebrate our success at the games, last night Senator JoAnne Buth and I, as co-chairs of the Canada-Russia Parliamentary Group, hosted an Olympic celebration right here on Parliament Hill.

All eyes of those in attendance last evening were fixated on former Canadian Olympic skier and gold medal winner, Senator Nancy Greene Raine and former Stanley Cup winning coach, Senator Jacques Demers, who gave us an insider's perspective on what our Olympic athletes are now feeling and experiencing at Sochi.

I am so proud to say that my riding of York Centre boasts the largest number of Russian-speaking people of any riding in the country, but in the true Canadian spirit, who is everyone cheering for? They are cheering for Canada.

*Statements by Members*

Yes, support for our athletes runs wide and deep through all immigrant communities. Just as when my family first came to Canada, immigrants come from all over the world to join the great Canadian family. Whether young or old, all rally behind their adopted home, the greatest country on earth, Canada. God bless our great country and our Olympians.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, sadly, Canadians are seeing that the government gets the gold medal for illusions in the budget.

They recognize the dementia health care crisis facing Canada: by 2031, there will be 1.4 million Canadians with dementia, at a cost of \$300 billion, but the government said no to a modest \$3 million to kick-start a national plan. All we see is research money that was previously announced.

Research is necessary, but a real plan means early diagnosis, integration of care, training of the dementia workforce, help for caregivers, and partnerships with the provinces and cities.

Canada is lagging behind other countries, with no leadership. Hundreds of cities inspired by my Bill C-356 are passing resolutions. Dozens of petitions are being tabled.

Let us put politics aside and agree to a national strategy for dementia.

\* \* \*

**UKRAINE**

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while much of our attention is focused on Sochi and the achievements of our Olympic athletes, it is important that we not forget the situation in nearby Ukraine.

The struggle for freedom and democracy is being waged by hundreds of thousands of ordinary Ukrainians on the streets of Kiev.

I was in Ukraine recently, and I know the resolve of the people is firm. They want a better future for their nation.

While the Ukrainian government has partially withdrawn its draconian anti-protest legislation, opposition leaders are still being kidnapped and tortured, and protestors are still being brutalized.

The treatment of Dmytro Bulatov, a leader of AutoMaidan who was held captive for more than a week and beaten and tortured for the purpose of gaining a false confession, is only one recent example.

I therefore call on the government of Ukraine to sit down with the opposition and resolve this crisis peacefully.

\* \* \*

**HEART MONTH**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, February is Heart Month in Canada. Today, heart disease and stroke takes one life every seven minutes, and 90% of Canadians have at least one risk factor.

There is much we can do to protect ourselves and our loved ones. The Heart and Stroke Foundation continues to make a real difference in reducing death and disability caused by heart disease and stroke, and taking a lead in health promotion and prevention.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation's 2014 report on the health of Canadians reveals that, despite great gains, there is still room for improvement.

There are indicators that our new generations are not as healthy as their parents. We owe it to our children to give them a chance to grow up healthy and to embrace a lifestyle that includes exercise and wholesome food.

We also need to continue to do our part in the ridings we represent, by informing our constituents about the importance of active living.

This is also our opportunity to create healthy environments and communities that make the healthy choice an easy choice. By supporting the Heart and Stroke Foundation this February, we can make a real difference for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

**PRINCE ALBERT CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to congratulate Mr. Lyle Karasiuk of Prince Albert on receiving the City of Prince Albert's citizen of the year award.

Among Lyle's list of achievements are his many years of service to the Red Cross, the Canadian Cancer Society's Relay for Life, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and other volunteer-based organizations within the city.

Lyle's raising of \$1 million in 30 days to furnish a new 60-room long-term care facility is remarkable. The facility is now set to open in Prince Albert.

Lyle's contribution to our community has also been recognized through his reception of the Governor General's Exemplary Service Medal, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

We thank Lyle for his commitment to our community. On behalf of the members of the House of Commons, I offer him my sincerest congratulations.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**LUCIE FORTIN**

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise here today to talk about a wonderful event that took place last week. Someone from Quebec City, Lucie Fortin, who is originally from Saguenay, was awarded the Fernand-Dufour prize, honouring her for over 40 years of volunteer service within our community.

Her 40 years of commitment are impressive, not only for their sheer length, but also for the variety of things she has done. Ms. Fortin has worked in virtually every sector in Duberger, building relationships between many key people and contributing to the common heritage.

She has made many important contributions, but today I wish to focus on one particular success: Ms. Fortin founded the *Maison des jeunes l'Antidote*, the very first to be administered by an independent co-operative. Her extensive experience as a teacher allowed her to create this gathering place, which enriches the lives of the young people of our region.

I would like to join my provincial counterpart, MNA Sylvain Lévesque, in extending my sincere congratulations and commending Ms. Fortin for all her hard work. Congratulations, my dear Ms. Fortin, on your many successes and all the precious memories you have created.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### 1948 WINTER OLYMPIC ATHLETE

**Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while Canadians are looking on with pride as our athletes are dominating at the Sochi Winter Games, I would like to pay tribute to one very special Londoner, Andy Gilpin. He was a member of the Canadian hockey team that won the gold medal at the 1948 Olympic Games in St. Moritz.

Mr. Gilpin is now 93 years young. He was a member of the "RCAF Flyers" who won that great victory over Team Czechoslovakia to take home the gold medal. The Flyers were selected from RCAF stations across Canada.

Sixty-six years later, we celebrated "Andy Gilpin Day" last week with a luncheon hosted by the 427 London Wing of the RCAF Association. Along with his family and friends, Hockey Canada and the Ontario Hockey Federation made presentations in his honour. Andy is one of less than a half dozen hockey players of the 1948 Olympic team to whom we still have the chance to pay personal tribute.

We honour his exceptional service to our country, and we honour his incredible contribution to Canadian sport. He makes London and Canada proud.

Through Andy Gilpin, we say, "Go, Team Canada".

\* \* \*

#### THE BUDGET

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's economic action plan 2014 includes many important measures that will benefit the people of Mississauga.

Since 2006, our government has been keeping Canada on the right path for economic growth. This includes lowering taxes in order to save the average Canadian family nearly \$3,400 per year. We have also cut taxes for job-creating businesses, allowing them to hire more workers, and have opened up new markets for Canadian goods and services, most recently through the historic Canada–European Union trade agreement.

#### Statements by Members

We are also introducing the Canada apprentice loan to provide interest-free student loans to apprentices, which will help young people in Mississauga benefit from the GTA construction boom.

Our government is investing an additional \$500 million in the automotive innovation fund to ensure that Ontario and the GTA remain leaders in auto parts manufacturing and assembly.

Our government is providing an additional \$46 million in support for advanced research and scientific discoveries at Canada's leading universities and colleges such as the University of Toronto Mississauga and Sheridan College.

This budget delivers for my constituents in Mississauga.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[Translation]

#### GAÉTAN BRASSARD

**Mr. Jean-François Larose (Repentigny, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this week I spoke with Gaétan Brassard, a 61-year-old man from my riding.

Mr. Brassard is in a very difficult position. He earns barely \$10,000 a year and has serious health problems. He has to use a walker. His life has been so depressing in the past two years that he admitted that he had considered taking his own life with a gun.

The problem is that he is not the only Canadian in this situation. Millions of people are in the same situation. When I think of the government's cuts and then Canada Post's cuts to services, I think of Mr. Brassard, who will have to go pick up his mail with his walker.

We have a serious problem. Honestly, our citizens deserve better. Mr. Brassard deserves better, and in 2015, the NDP will provide something better.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

**Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Team Canada continues to own the podium during the winter Olympics, and we have seen many touching moments.

Who can forget Alex Bilodeau's celebrating his repeat gold performance with his brother Frédéric, or watching the Dufour-Lapointe sisters, Justine and Chloé, winning gold and silver while their sister and teammate Maxime cheered them on to victory.

Yesterday, we saw something that really epitomizes both sportsmanship and friendship. I am referring to Calgary's own, speed skater Gilmore Junio, who volunteered his spot in the Men's 1,000 to his teammate, Denny Morrison, who was knocked out of competition due to an unlucky fall during qualifications.

*Statements by Members*

Many of us have heard what Junio said to Morrison just before the race; it was, “just kill it”. Denny went on to do just that; winning the silver medal and, along with Gilmore, winning the hearts of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Perhaps Denny Morrison said it best after the race: “That’s the spirit of the Olympics. That’s the spirit of Canada”.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MICHEL GOUIN**

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House to commend the invaluable work of one of my constituents, Michel Gouin. He is the director of the organization Parrainage civique and has put his heart and soul into improving the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities. His social involvement speaks volumes about how important it is to him that each and every person is fully integrated and involved in our society.

In addition, Michel Gouin is a source of inspiration for our young people. Through his foundation, Fondation Michel Gouin, he promotes healthy living. Last November, he ran more than 320 kilometres, from one capital to another, Ottawa to Drummondville. Yes, Drummondville is considered a capital, although the hon. members likely already knew that.

There is no doubt about it, your projects will help our community grow, Mr. Gouin. Thank you for raising the profile of the greater Drummond area.

\* \* \*

[English]

**WINDSOR**

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Windsor Mayor Eddie Francis said our region scored a trifecta in the recent budget: millions for retraining; \$500 million more for the auto sector; and \$631 million to kick-start the DRIC bridge between Windsor and Detroit, a project to deliver thousands of construction jobs and long-term investment to secure prosperity for Windsor families for generations.

Sadly, Windsor’s two NDP MPs are turning their backs on Windsor, voting as their leader wishes and voting against these transformative investments. Sadly, too, this is not their first time. They voted “no” to our border crossings fund in 2006, and in 2007, they voted “no” to \$400 million toward the Herb Gray Parkway. In 2012, both NDP MPs took a pass on stand-alone votes on our Bridge To Strengthen Trade Act.

There is time for the two Windsor MPs to reconsider: will they stand in their seats and vote with Windsor and its families, or will they betray them?

\* \* \*

**THE BUDGET**

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul’s, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the defensive Ontario members of Parliament from the government, I think Tuesday’s do-nothing budget is bad news for Ontario and is failing middle-class Ontarians.

During these tough economic times, the government is leaving Ontarians out in the cold by cutting another \$641 million in transfer payments; money that could have helped support the people of Ontario.

This insulting budget comes on the heels of years of cuts that have undermined Ontarians’ quality of life. The government has slashed funding for programs in health care, environmental protection, community safety, and skills development and training. Funding has been eliminated for the patient wait-times guarantee trust, the HPV vaccine trust, the federal-provincial transportation action plan for the Greater Toronto Area, and a number of other critical programs Ontarians relied upon.

Now the government is planning on running roughshod over the objections of provinces to implement their flawed, year-old Canada job grant program, which remains a non-existent fantasy to this day.

How can the Minister of Finance, who is an elected representative for Ontario, justify the abject failure of his budget to address the needs of Ontario?

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**FIREARMS**

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I rose in this House to point out the shameful scheme that the Liberal leader was cooking up to confiscate rifles and shotguns from law-abiding Canadian hunters.

The media party and other Liberal elites seem to have taken issue with the fact that on this side of the House, we always stand up for law-abiding hunters, farmers, and sport shooters.

While the media party looks down their noses at us common folk who enjoy hunting and sport shooting, we can see that the Liberals are feeling the pressure. The Liberals removed public references to their Canada-wide gun grab, but law-abiding gun owners will not be fooled by the “now you see it, now you don’t” Liberal convention website cover-up. They know Liberals are trying to bring back the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry. It becomes clearer and clearer every day that only the Conservative Party will stand up for the rights of Canadian gun owners.

In a rush to cover up his party’s attempt to run roughshod over law-abiding firearms owners, the Liberal leader, like Quick Draw McGraw, has just shot himself in the foot.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pétain, a citizen concerned by the state of our economy, said, “In times like these, it is hard to establish a proper finance system. The minister is certainly not the right person for the job”.

Well, he was right. This budget attacks the provinces and workers. Otherwise, there is nothing, nada: nothing for rail safety despite the Lac-Mégantic tragedy that occurred while this government was twiddling its thumbs instead of issuing fines to a delinquent company; nothing for creating jobs for our young people even though their unemployment rate is twice the national average; nothing for climate change; nothing for health; nothing for our seniors; and baseless attacks against workers who organize to improve their living conditions.

Yesterday, during question period, the Minister of Finance did the same thing as his budget: absolutely nothing. He remained seated, on automatic pilot, while his boss ate away at his credibility, question after question. Today they would have us believe that they are pals. I do not think so. Canadians deserve better than a government that takes a year off. Canadians deserve an NDP government.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Communications Security Establishment's independent watchdog, Judge Jean-Pierre Plouffe, confirmed that the agency was behaving lawfully. This assessment marks a significant humiliation for the CBC, which lined the Brazilian bank account of a former porn executive in order to pay for its so-called news scoop.

All the media that repeated so breathlessly Glenn Greenwald's slandering allegations about Communications Security Establishment Canada will probably ignore the hon. Jean-Pierre Plouffe's report, and they will also continue ignoring the scandal of the CBC paying "porno spy" Glenn Greenwald for news.

However, while the media avoid correcting the stories about CSEC's activities that they initially reported on, Canadians can rest safe in the knowledge that Communications Security Establishment Canada continues to fulfill its mandate of protecting the safety and security of Canadians from threats and that it continues to respect Canadian laws.

---

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### TAXATION

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in 2011, the Conservatives promised to bring in income splitting, which would benefit less than 15% of the population.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance cast doubt on that promise and then, right after, the Minister of Employment and Social Development said that the promise would be kept. The Prime Minister said that we would see.

Will they abandon their promise to bring in income splitting, keep it, or will we have to see?

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once the budget is balanced, which it is not yet, once we have a

surplus, which will be next year, our government is committed to greater tax relief for Canadian families.

Only Conservatives, as a matter of act, can be trusted to reduce taxes to Canadian families. In fact, we introduced pension splitting for seniors, which the opposition voted against.

• (1420)

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's answer, but the Conservatives are flailing around in confusion and the finance minister is directly contradicting Conservative policy. Under the Conservatives' tax plan, 86% of Canadians will get absolutely no benefit—86%.

Does the Minister of Finance stand by his criticism that a plan that does not benefit the vast majority of Canadians does not benefit Canada?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, because of our government, Canadians enjoy the lowest taxes they have had in 50 years. We have done something that Liberals and NDP people do not do anything about. That is, we have reduced government spending. We have reduced government spending for three years in a row.

I know this is a foreign concept to the members opposite, but we have done it without reducing transfers to the provinces for health and education and transfers to individuals, including persons with disabilities.

\* \* \*

### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP people, power to the people.

[Translation]

This morning, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform was at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, but he did not explain his attacks on Marc Mayrand or his refusal to consult Canadians outside the Ottawa bubble. I would like to give him another opportunity to explain himself.

Why does he refuse to travel to the various provinces across the country to consult all Canadians about his electoral reform plans?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I always travel outside Ottawa to speak to all Canadians.

I have spoken to Canadians about the fair elections act. For example, I spoke to organizations that represent persons with disabilities who have a hard time voting with the methods we use now.

We will develop better information for these people, so that they can learn about the special services available to help them vote. That is just one example of the ideas I heard from Canadians that I included in the fair elections act.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader left today's committee meeting on the unfair elections act to say he was against cross-country hearings, and said that meeting with Canadians would be a "gong show". Does the Minister of State for Democratic Reform agree with the parliamentary secretary? Is that why they will not have cross-country public hearings, or are they just afraid to face Canadians?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously the committee will hear from Canadians. The member merely has to provide a list of witnesses and they can all be brought to the committee for testimony. They can share their views. We will take them into consideration. I know the learned members of the committee will consider those views as they improve the bill, which has been described by the former CEO as an A minus. Hopefully the committee can work with the government for a change to turn it into an A plus.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary said he was opposed to cross-country hearings on the unfair elections act because it would "influence public opinion". Is that what the minister is afraid of, Canadians having the audacity to exercise their democratic right to express their personal views on this bill?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. The member and his party declared their opposition to the fair elections act before they had read a single word of it. Now they are trying to obstruct further examination of the question with an attempt at holding a costly circus that will distract from the work the committee needs to do, which is to study how we can keep everyday Canadians in charge of democracy by putting special interest groups to the sidelines and rule-breakers out of the game altogether.

\* \* \*

● (1425)

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the ministers of finance, transport and small business all expressed reservations about the income-splitting campaign promise. The employment minister rebuked them, saying that Conservatives "always keep campaign commitments".

Well, in the 2006 election, the Conservatives—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. I have asked members before to hold off until members are finished asking the questions before they applaud. I know they are eager to applaud the member, but they will be free to do so when he is finished asking the question.

The hon. member for Papineau.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, in the 2006 election, the Conservatives promised Canadians a patient wait times guarantee.

My question is for the Minister of Health. It has been eight years. When can we expect this promise to be kept?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, we have invested over a billion dollars in the patient wait times guarantee. According to the Canadian Institute for Health information, there have been excellent results on the wait time guarantees, which we are working on with the provinces.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, they are still working on it eight years later.

In the 2008 election, the Conservatives' most expensive campaign promise was to reduce taxes on diesel fuel by nearly a billion dollars each year.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. It has been over five years. Has he reconsidered that promise as well?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have reduced taxes in more than 160 ways since we were elected in 2006. We will continue to keep taxes low and balance the budget.

We do have a plan for a balanced budget. Unlike the members opposite, we will stick to our plan and the budget will be balanced in 2015.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the 2008 election campaign, the Conservatives promised to introduce emission regulations for the oil and gas sector. This Prime Minister even boasted that it would be the equivalent of a \$65 price on carbon. That was over five years ago.

My question is for the Minister of the Environment. When can we expect this promise to be kept?

*[English]*

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our budget is committed to protecting our environment, as well as keeping our economy strong.

Building on our record of protecting historic amounts of land, budget 2014 is investing a significant amount of money in urgent areas, including nearly \$400 million to fix dams, bridges, and highways through the national parks that are in urgent need of repair.

I have a question for the other side of the House. Why, after a decade of being in power, did the Liberals do nothing to maintain the infrastructure in these parks?



*Oral Questions***INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the finance minister and the employment minister are at odds over income-splitting. They are also at odds over working with the provinces. While the employment minister claims he is committed to negotiating a deal on job training, the finance minister is delivering threats and an ultimatum. He is uniting the provinces in opposition to this budget. The premiers of Ontario, Quebec, and even Saskatchewan are calling out the finance minister.

Will the finance minister start to listen to premiers like Brad Wall and maybe start working with the provinces?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the budget says, if the hon. member cares to read it, is that negotiations are continuing with the provinces, the employment minister is continuing his discussions with the provinces, but that we want to move ahead by April 1.

The reason is that we have thousands of Canadians who are not matched with the thousands of jobs that are available. This matters to these young people in this country, and that is why we are moving ahead.

\* \* \*

• (1430)

**THE BUDGET**

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly, this cabinet is divided and confused, and Canadians are being made to wait for help until the next election. No wonder the budget is being panned.

The Minister of Finance's budget also had nothing to say about climate change. We know the Conservatives' approach: it is to get marching orders from oil and gas lobbyists and then pit first nations, environmentalists, and concerned Canadians against resource companies.

Does the Minister of Finance really think that new snowmobile trails qualify as an environmental plan?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is a world leader when it comes to addressing climate change.

We continue to work with the provinces and the territories on reducing emissions from the oil and gas sector. It is premature to comment further on any future regulations.

What I can say is that thanks to our actions, we have seen significant reductions in greenhouse gases, unlike the NDP who think that we can tax our way out of greenhouse gases.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, more and more provinces are coming out against the Conservatives' budgetary approach. One thing that really frustrates them is the April 1 ultimatum regarding the Canada job grant. By refusing to hold consultations and interfering in provincial

jurisdictions, the Conservatives are punishing workers first and foremost, and they are stifling economic development.

I understand that things are not so rosy right now between the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Employment. Could they at least talk to one another and commit to withdrawing their ultimatum, which is doing nothing to help train workers?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we obviously need to do better when it comes to public investments in skills training. We also need to increase private sector investments in training. We need to connect training with real jobs. That is the goal of the Canada job grant. That is why we are working closely with the provinces to reach an agreement.

By the end of the fiscal year, we hope to be able to deliver not only training, but also jobs for young Canadians.

\* \* \*

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this budget does not reverse the irresponsible and shameful cuts to veterans' services and, what is more, the Conservatives are also increasing taxes on the pensions of those who have served our country. Like public servants, members of the military will have to pay more for their pension plan. The Conservatives want to take hundreds of dollars more out of veterans' pockets.

Why are the Conservatives looking for more concessions from our veterans?

[English]

**Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the question is misleading.

Veterans with service-related conditions are covered by the new veterans charter program. What we are discussing here are changes to voluntary supplementary health benefits.

It is fair and reasonable that the costs of this voluntary supplementary health care coverage be split evenly with the taxpayers of Canada. Even with the changes, this remains an excellent deal and it will remain an affordable plan.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in 1995 the Liberal government changed the means test of the Last Post Fund from an entry level of \$24,000 in income to \$12,000 in income. Unfortunately, 19 years later, the means test is still at \$12,000.

*Oral Questions*

Now I thank the government very much for the fact that there is more money in the Last Post Fund. Some modern day veterans may now be eligible. However, if the means test is not changed, many families and their veterans who pass away will not have access to the Last Post Fund.

Will the government now change the means test so that more veterans who pass away and their families will have access to the program?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member that our government remains committed to ensuring that Canadian veterans and their families have the support they need.

That is why in economic action plan 2014, veterans' families can now avail themselves of some \$108 million-plus with regard to the Last Post Fund to ensure that the modern day veterans previously excluded will be able to have a dignified burial.

We are doing the best we can, and we will continue working for our veterans.

\* \* \*

• (1435)

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have blocked cross-country hearings on their unfair elections act. Obviously, they are afraid of public opinion. They are proposing massive and complex changes to our election laws that would significantly change the way our democracy operates.

Unlike the Conservatives, the NDP wants Canadians to have their say. Why are the Conservatives so opposed to consulting Canadians?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, she mentions the changes in the fair elections act. In fact, there are changes that would keep everyday Canadians in charge of democracy by putting special interests on the sidelines and rule breakers out of business. The bill would close loopholes to big money, such as the one the Liberals used to turn unpaid debts into illegal donations. It would crack down on political impostors who make rogue calls. It would make it easier to vote for law-abiding citizens, while preventing voter fraud.

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have admitted that the reason they do not want hearings is because they are too afraid of public opinion. They are shutting down debate in the House and refusing to consult Canadians.

From Squamish to St. John's, Canadians are concerned, and they want an opportunity to have their say. Elections belong to the people, not to politicians.

Why won't the government take the time to listen to Canadians?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have listened to Canadians. They told us that they want better law enforcement. That is why we are giving the watchdog of elections law sharper teeth, a longer reach, and a freer hand.

“Sharper teeth” means stronger penalties for existing offences. “Longer reach” means dozens of new offences that he would enforce, including a prohibition on obstructing the watchdog's investigations or lying to his investigators. “A freer hand” means that the watchdog would be completely independent, controlling his own investigations and his own staff, and that no one could fire him without cause.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives stubbornly refuse to consult Canadians because, according to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the NDP might mobilize too many people to challenge the bill.

I would like to thank him very much for complimenting our organizational abilities. In fact, the NDP does not have to do anything to mobilize people against this affront to our democracy. The Conservatives should leave their Ottawa bubble and listen to what people in Quebec City, Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke have to say. What are they afraid of?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is why we want a debate on the substance of the Fair Elections Act. Even before reading a single word of the bill, the NDP were against it. They should work with us to strengthen our legislation and prevent fraudulent calls and illegal donations, such as the union donations that the NDP accepted.

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I knew that the Conservatives routinely prevent debate in the House. I knew that they prefer to circumvent the legislative process and disregard any democratic legitimacy, but this time the Conservatives are clearly laughing at Canadians.

They are using the bill to give their party an advantage in the next election, and they do not even bother to listen to what Canadians have to say, probably because they are afraid of what they will hear.

If the Conservatives want to judge the quality of the Chief Electoral Officer's work, why not ask Canadians what they think?

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have told us that they do not believe in voter fraud. That is why the fair elections act will protect the integrity of our voting system.

In the last election, for example, according to a report by Elections Canada's own commission, we know that there were 50,000 irregularities linked to vouching. In fact, those were serious errors. Judges described them as serious enough to potentially overturn existing votes and maybe even elections in individual ridings.

We think that is serious enough to tackle, and that is what the fair elections act would do by ending vouching as a use of identification.

\* \* \*

### TAXATION

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance attacked the Conservative policy on income splitting. He said, “I’m not sure that overall it benefits our society” and “I think income splitting needs a long, hard analytical look by our think tanks”.

This analysis has already been done, in fact, by the C.D. Howe Institute and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Now that the analysis by think tanks has actually happened, does the minister agree with these think tanks that income splitting would do nothing for 86% of Canadian families, and that “it’s an expensive tax gift for the rich”?

• (1440)

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I contemplate thinking about issues, I rarely think of the Liberal Party.

As I have said, once the budget is balanced, which it is not yet, our government is committed to greater tax relief for Canadian families, and only Conservatives, because our track record shows it, can be trusted to reduce taxes for Canadian families.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I think about balanced budgets, I rarely think of the minister.

Yesterday the minister dismissed the Conservative election promise on income splitting. He said he is not sure that it benefits society. He said that other priorities should be acted on before income splitting, but the employment minister disagreed. He said, “We keep our election promises. We made this commitment to do this policy in the next budget”.

Does the finance minister still speak for the government on tax policy like income splitting, or is it now the employment minister who speaks on fiscal policy for the government?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member opposite that it is this government that brought in pension splitting back in 2006, which has been a remarkable success and which, for some strange reason, the opposition voted against.

\* \* \*

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for eight long years, nearly every piece of military equipment purchased, even those deemed urgent, has been botched or cancelled outright. This budget slashes \$3 billion from defence equipment spending, and that is on top of \$7 billion that had been clawed back previously. The Conservatives’ failed defence strategy is little more than a tax-funded photo op with troops while secretly balancing the budget on their backs.

What exactly is being cut this time, and what essential equipment will our troops continue to have to do without?

### Oral Questions

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there has been no cut, and any suggestions from the opposition are completely false.

Since national defence did not spend the money this year, economic action plan 2014 will ensure that all of this money will remain available to the Canadian Armed Forces next year and into the future.

Again, this money is there when the armed forces need it. After the Liberal decade of darkness, we have put our men and women in uniform first by increasing the national defence budget by 27% since 2006. We have made the single largest investment in our armed forces in a century, and the budget continues in the same direction.

\* \* \*

### RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, MMA has been involved in 129 accidents and has repeatedly violated safety rules. For years, the government has done nothing. There has not been one single fine. The victims of Lac-Mégantic are suing Transport Canada for allowing MMA to run trains through their towns despite the company’s terrible safety record.

Will the minister now join with the people of Lac-Mégantic and prosecute MMA? Which side is she on, the people of Lac-Mégantic or the violators?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member across knows, because we saw each other there, I was in Lac-Mégantic and I witnessed the devastation. It is something one never gets out of one’s mind, so, of course, just as the Prime Minister says, we stand behind the people of Lac-Mégantic in all of their troubles and we will be there for them without a doubt.

With respect to the difficulties with MMA and its non-compliance with the rules, this is exactly why last year we brought in the ability to administer fines. Before then, it simply did not exist.

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 21 violations were documented between 2004 and 2013, but MMA received no penalty here, whereas it received 28 fines in the United States. That is the rail safety record of the Conservatives and the Liberals.

Yesterday, the minister said, “If this company is found to have violated the rules and regulations of this country, it will absolutely be penalized to the ultimate extent of the law”.

The company has violated the rules and regulations 21 times. Why has it never been penalized?

*Oral Questions*

●(1445)

*[English]*

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Transport Canada has a variety of compliance measures that they use on those infractions, but that is the past. What this government has done is brought in the ability for front-line workers to fine companies that are in violation of rules and regulations.

As these investigations continue and we get the results of these investigations, it is very clear that if there are violations to the Railway Safety Act or the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, there will be prosecutions to the full extent of the law.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about the past, but the victims in Lac-Mégantic are getting a little tired of the minister's inconsistency.

That is probably why they filed a class action lawsuit yesterday against Transport Canada for gross negligence. Transport Canada completely failed to enforce its own rail safety rules, as I mentioned in my previous question.

Does the minister recognize that, by allowing MMA to continue its operations despite repeated violations of the regulations, her government failed in its responsibility to protect Canadians?

*[English]*

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of the rail accident in Lac-Mégantic, investigations continue on, but this government too continues on to ensure that we strengthen rail safety in every way possible with cross-country consultations and meetings with the FCM. We are doing absolutely everything we can to ensure that information is in the hands of communities and that railways know that emergency directives are in place and that rules are expected to be followed. We constantly work on this file.

What does the NDP do? It decides to block a government committee and a parliamentary committee from getting real information from real safety experts from around the country.

That is the NDP's politics; we get it done.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this do-nothing budget failed to deal with long-standing problems with rail safety. It also failed to protect passenger rail service through Atlantic Canada. CN is selling off a section of track in New Brunswick, and that could effectively put an end to passenger rail service to Halifax.

What is the government going to do? What are New Brunswick and Nova Scotia MPs going to do to protect passenger rail service to Halifax through New Brunswick?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would invite the hon. member to look at a rail map, perhaps, so he can see that there is more than one way to get from the Ontario-Quebec area into the Maritimes and Atlantic Canada.

I would say this as well: VIA Rail is an independent company. It takes its own business decisions and it takes its own decisions with respect to service levels and routes.

CN is currently in a process, under the Canadian Transportation Agency, to divest of its rail. We will see what happens with respect to this particular piece of rail, but no decisions have been made.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to the safety and security of Canadians. Last November the Minister of Transport asked the transport committee to study the transportation of dangerous goods to ensure they are moved safely and securely.

I know that when it comes to rail safety, our government is taking an approach focused on prevention, response, and liability, much like the world-class tanker safety initiative that we developed for marine transportation.

Would the Minister of Transport update the House on the committee's ongoing work in this study?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River for his work on this matter.

Indeed, as I mentioned already, the committee had been prepared to go across the country to talk to safety experts in their communities. Unfortunately, the NDP is playing politics and has decided that it wants to block this safety investigation from continuing. I am extremely disappointed by this decision.

I would give a tip to the member for Trinity—Spadina. I know that she is immersed in her mayoral campaign right now, but if she is thinking about communities, perhaps it is a good thing to think about consulting with communities instead of playing politics.

\* \* \*

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the economic engines of our communities. They are responsible for almost a third of Canada's GDP and almost 80% of all job creation, but budget 2014 just axed the hiring credit for small businesses.

The current government is abandoning Canada's real job creators. Why is it giving no-strings-attached handouts to its friends on Bay Street while rolling back job-creating incentives for hard-working business owners on Main Street?

●(1450)

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to the opposition, we know that it is entrepreneurs, small businesses, that create jobs in this country. It is not a big fat government. That is why, in our budget, we controlled our spending to ensure that we would have more freedom for entrepreneurs and less government. That is it. That is all. In that way, we will create economic growth in this country.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have abandoned the small business sector, even though it is a key economic engine.

While the tax rate for large corporations has steadily dropped, despite the recession, small and medium-sized businesses have received no assistance. Worse still, the Conservatives have completely scrapped the hiring tax credit for small and medium-sized businesses. The Conservatives say they want to focus on growth and job creation, but they are eliminating a major tool that can help them do so.

Why have the Conservatives scrapped the hiring tax credit?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, time and time again, we see, in the House, that the NDP votes against proposals that favour entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs. The budget promotes economic growth and entrepreneurs. We are making sure to keep our spending in check to enable entrepreneurs to create jobs and wealth. Wealth does not come from government spending, contrary to what the NDP believes. Increased government spending is not an economic stimulus. In fact, it would be a sedative for the Canadian economy.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Conservatives' flawed economic approach.

Despite a 14% unemployment rate and despite the fact that more than 390,000 young people are looking for work, there is nothing in budget 2014 for them. Youth employment centres, which drive job creation in Quebec, are staunchly critical of what will happen if the government pushes forward without coming to an agreement with the provinces on the Canada job grant.

Why is the Minister of Finance doing everything he can to make the situation worse for unemployed youth?

[English]

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on top of what our government has already been doing to help young people get back to work, let me tell the member what we have done in this current budget. We have created the Canada apprenticeship loan, which helps apprentices who are registered in the Red Seal trades complete their training by receiving over \$100 million in interest-free loans each year.

We have also supported youth employment with an additional investment of \$55 million for youth apprenticeships in small and medium-sized businesses and with high-demand entrepreneurs. We are helping young people get back to work.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives have frozen EI premiums at \$1.88 for every \$100 in insurable earnings, they are still gutting services. Is it because of a lack of funds? Definitely not. The employment insurance fund could have a surplus as high as \$6.4 billion by 2016.

Will the recipients benefit from that surplus or will the Conservatives go back to their old ways, which they learned from the Liberals, and dip into the fund to pay off their debt?

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think we made it quite clear that we have frozen EI rates because of fragility in the global economy and not wanting, at this time, to jeopardize the very modest economic recovery we have in this country, as well as in the United States, unlike Europe, so that we do have job growth, even though it is modest.

We will unfreeze the rates, and they will go to balance in the next few years. For the time being, we are not going to put a greater burden on employees and employers. We want to create jobs, not kill them.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

My concern is shared by many people in the arts community. The minister could alleviate this concern immediately by giving a clear answer. Some arts and culture programs are set to expire in 2015. The budget renews some of them, but not all. The Canada book fund is being cut from \$37 million to \$9 million, and the Canada music fund is being cut from \$23 million to \$9 million.

Can the minister confirm that these two programs—the ones I just mentioned—will be fully renewed, without any budget cuts, yes or no?

● (1455)

[English]

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister, in the budget, does commit to ensuring that both those budgets will remain intact for 2014.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the budget touches upon social housing, but there is not a mention of co-op housing.

Over the last decades, the Government of Canada helped build 60,000 co-op units, in which 250,000 Canadians live. Through agreements, 20% of these people receive geared-to-income support.

The bulk of these agreements will expire in the next few years. Why did the government choose not to include the renewal of these agreements in its 2014 budget?

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that it was the Liberal government that stopped renewing these agreements in the nineties.

### Oral Questions

These agreements are going to be completed over the next 20 to 40 years. They will be completed because the mortgages will be paid off. We all know that when mortgages are paid off, subsidies do not need to continue, and we do not keep paying the banks.

We have renewed our investment in affordable housing. The provinces certainly have the flexibility, if after these agreements end, they want to continue to provide other types of subsidies. We are giving them that flexibility.

We are actually getting results for the most vulnerable in our society.

\* \* \*

### RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, grain bins across the Prairies are bursting at the seams, because farmers cannot get their grain to market, and they are being forced to sell at fire-sale prices, as low as \$4 a bushel. Now the grain companies tell the agriculture committee that they cannot ship grain because of the cold weather, as if cold weather is something new on the Canadian prairies, when the real problem is that they are shipping twice as many cars dedicated to oil as cars dedicated to grain, and there is no Canadian Wheat Board to negotiate reliable shipping.

Now, we have heard a lot about rail safety today. What is the Minister of Transport doing about rail service to ensure that Canadian farmers have the railcars they need to get their grain to market?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as usual, the member from downtown Winnipeg has his grain companies and his railways all mixed up.

At the end of the day, we have been working with all of the players in the supply chain. There is a holistic approach required. We continue to work with everybody, looking for every efficiency we can find. Grain is moving, but not at the rate that is going to be required to clean bins out before road bans hit and so on.

I continue to meet with the railways and the grain companies. The next meeting is February 24, where they are to bring their plans forward as to how we attack the piles of grain that are out there and get them moving to port and off to import countries.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, grain farmers have not seen a bottleneck like this since the 1970s, contrary to what the minister is saying.

Grain is vital to Canada's economy. We must have an efficient, reliable grain-transport system. The current law is not protecting the interests of our producers. We need better rail service laws, with enforceable performance standards, accountability, and penalties. Will the Minister of Transport finally agree to meet with the producers and establish the long-awaited regulations on performance?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been doing just that as a government. The Minister of Transport and I continue to meet with the grain farmers and oilseed producers across western Canada, who are the most affected by this.

We continue to work with the grain companies and the railways to work through the holistic situation that needs to be put in play to ensure that everybody has access to good rail freight. The cold weather cannot last forever. This global warming has to stop sometime, and when it does break, trains will get back to the length they need to be, and there will be more grain moved to port authorities and moved off to countries around the world.

\* \* \*

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that there are over 600 unidentified human remains across Canada. That means there are over 600 families that have not been able to have any closure in the loss of a loved one. Our government is standing up for victims by returning to the heart of our justice system. That is why we have announced a victims bill of rights.

Could the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness please tell this House what our government is doing to assist families of unidentified missing persons?

● (1500)

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Burlington, who has presented a private member's bill on that very same issue, for standing up for victims.

[Translation]

As indicated on page 226 of budget 2014, our government will introduce a DNA-based missing persons index. This database is being welcomed by organizations like the Missing Children's Network.

[English]

Let me thank the Minister of Finance and all the colleagues who have supported the coming of this DNA database. This will help bring closure to families. I want to praise Judy Peterson, who has been advocating for this for 20 years.

\* \* \*

### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, three times the government has insulted Chinese Canadians. First, the Conservatives capped the Canadian experience class, which disproportionately affected Chinese Canadians. Then they raised the age limit for citizenship language tests from 54 to 64, when many older Chinese people speak imperfect English. Then they eliminated the immigration investor program, when almost 80% of the applicants are Chinese.

Are Conservatives inadvertently picking on Chinese people?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is an unbelievable accusation against a government that has apologized for the head tax and has made China almost our top source for immigration for multiple years now. We continue to receive the largest number of visitors and the largest number of students and to issue the largest number of work permits to citizens of the People's Republic of China. That never happened under the Liberals.

Moreover, we are cleaning up the Liberal mess by eliminating a program that did not achieve its objectives. Education, employment, and tax outcomes for immigrants were lower than all the other economic immigration programs we have, and there was a 10-year backlog left by an incompetent Liberal government. We are still cleaning up their—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the massive cuts announced in the Conservatives' latest budget will force the Bagotville military base to cut its operating and maintenance budget by 19.2%, which will have disastrous effects on my region's economy.

Can the Minister of National Defence tell us whether or not these cuts will happen? If so, does he realize the effects of the difficult choices he is forcing the commander of the only francophone air base in North America to make? How can he be sure that these cuts will not affect the training of our fighter pilots?

[English]

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to ensure that our armed forces are equipped with the best equipment to protect our interests at home and abroad at the best value for Canadian taxpayers. We are going to continue to help, support, and thank our men and women in uniform, and that is our commitment.

Our commitment is to renew our Canada first defence strategy. Now and in the future, Canada's armed forces will defend Canada and protect our borders, maintain sovereignty over our northern lands and waters, fight alongside our allies to defend their interests, and respond to emergencies within Canada and around the world.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the safest and healthiest food systems in the world, and our government has a strong record of action on this file. As we study budget 2014, we can readily recognize the absurdity of the Liberal leader's statement that the budget will balance itself, so with responsible budgeting in mind, could the Minister of Health please update the House on our government's latest investments in food safety?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, budget 2014 will deliver nearly \$400 million to further strengthen our healthy and safe food framework for Canadians and to hire additional front-line inspectors. To date the feedback has been tremendously positive. Just yesterday it was said by a particularly high profile supporter that "...there is good news in the budget with

regard to food safety, including the hiring of 200 new food inspectors", and this is "a good idea".

Who said that? Our very own Leader of the Opposition.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's space industry needs help to recover and develop. The latest budget has nothing to help the Canadian Space Agency. Thousands of direct and indirect jobs rely on this sector, especially in Saint-Hubert. The Conservatives are sitting on their hands as losses pile up in this highly competitive sector that is vital to our economy, especially with Bombardier and Héroux-Devtek. How can they let a jewel of our economy waste away like this?

● (1505)

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. As my colleague should know, last week we announced our new policy for the space industry. We have the support of Chris Hadfield and David Saint-Jacques, the new astronaut who will be involved in the process in the future. We are making new investments through this new policy to protect these key jobs in the future. We are using the Emerson report as we move forward with this new policy.

These new measures will benefit the aerospace industry in each region of the country.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, Cons. Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, Ontario technically qualified each and every year for equalization between 1977 and 1982. Understanding that Ontario had not suddenly become poor but rather that resource-based provinces had become relatively richer, Premier Bill Davis turned down equalization, reasoning that if Ontario qualified for equalization, this must mean there is something seriously awry with the equalization formula, not something wrong with Ontario. His principled position was a source of pride and confidence for all Ontarians. Rather than crying poor, Premier Davis and the big blue machine focused on building a stronger Ontario, with great success.

As an Ontarian, the Minister of Finance has directed record federal transfers to Ontario. Could he please detail these massive transfers to the Province of Ontario?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member from Peterborough, Ontario for the question.

*Business of the House*

Ontario received almost \$19.2 billion in federal transfers this year, which is an increase of 76% from under the old Liberal government, including almost \$2 billion for equalization; over \$12.3 billion through the Canada health transfer, which is an increase of 60% since 2006; and \$4.8 billion through the Canada social transfer, which is an increase of 53% since the Liberals. This support ensures that Ontario has the resources it needs, if properly spent, for health, education, and social services.

**The Speaker:** That concludes question period for today.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, arising out of question period, the Minister of Transport raised a serious concern about the ability of the transportation committee to travel, to hear from Canadians about rail safety.

She did not express those consultations as being a gong show or a costly circus, as her colleagues have done, so I would seek to move the following motion that I believe will remove the impasse and allow the minister to have the hearings that she so desperately wants. It would allow Canadians to also have hearings that they so desperately want about our Elections Act. I move:

That it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs that in relation to its study on Bill C-23, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts, that it have the power to travel to all regions of Canada: Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, northern Ontario, the Prairies, British Columbia, and the north, as well as downtown urban settings and rural and remote settings, in the winter-spring, 2014, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** It being Thursday, I would imagine that the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley would like to pose the traditional Thursday question.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that was a good example of what happens when the NDP tries to work with the government to serve Canadians when it comes to our democracy. It is okay to have consultations on one subject, but not another. To me, and to Canadians and other New Democrats, that is a very serious problem with this government.

[*English*]

It is shameful that the Conservative government puts its partisan interests in place and in front of the interests of Canadians. We have just sought to allow the government to move forward, not just on all committee travel but on allowing Canadians to be consulted and listened to when it comes to our election process.

This is not about politicians making the rules; it is about Canadians building, reinforcing, and renewing our democracy. The homeless, first nations, seniors, and new Canadians are all groups who will have their voices limited by the Conservative government when it comes to our country.

We now have the spectacle of a Canadian government calling the idea of such cross-country consultations a “partisan circus”, a “costly circus”, a “gong show”. This is shameful. It is unprecedented in Canadian history that a government would seek to say that creating new election laws is a partisan activity, that Canadians should be shut out from the process, and that it should take place in the Ottawa bubble with only Conservatives driving the car. We think this is wrong.

New Democrats will stand against this. We will seek to be reasonable with the government at all stages, as we have just attempted to do. In all cases and in all ways, we will represent the interests and values of Canadians who want to see a healthy vibrant democracy, not one constructed by this minister and the Conservative government.

● (1510)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think that was the Thursday question and a question about what business we will be undertaking.

[*Translation*]

This afternoon we will continue the second day of debate on economic action plan 2014.

As we learned in Tuesday's budget, and have been hearing in this House in the debate since, our government is on track to balance the budget while keeping taxes low and protecting the programs and services Canadians count on.

Since the global recession, Canada has achieved the best job creation record in the G7, the strongest income growth and one of the best economic performances in the G7.

Economic action plan 2014 builds on this record of achievement with positive measures to grow the economy and help create jobs.

[*English*]

Under the terms of a motion adopted by the House yesterday, the vote on the Liberal subamendment to the budget will be held on the evening of Monday, February 24. The third and fourth days of debate on this year's budget will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 25 and 26.

Of course, those dates follow the upcoming constituency week. However, before we get there, we will debate Bill C-15, the Northwest Territories devolution act, at third reading tomorrow.

On Thursday, February 27, we will be sitting with a Wednesday schedule because at 11:00 a.m. that morning His Highness the Aga Khan will give an address to both Houses of Parliament, an event that I am sure all hon. members will eagerly anticipate.

That afternoon, we will start second reading debate on Bill C-24, the strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act. This bill represents the first comprehensive overhaul of Canada's citizenship laws in a generation.



*The Budget*

That day will also be the day designated, pursuant to Standing Order 66(2), for concluding the debate on concurrence on the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Monday, February 24, shall be the fifth allotted day.

Finally, while it is not reflected in Standing Order 28, tomorrow, Friday, is Valentine's Day. To this I say to my wife Cheryl:

Liberals are red,  
Conservatives are blue,  
this motion is not debatable,  
I really love you.

In the spirit of love on Valentine's Day, I wish all the best for everyone, and those who are close to them, here in the House.

What Londoners need to see in this budget are initiatives for manufacturing, food production and processing, and small business start-up help. I was sorry to see that there was very little help to get Londoners back to work. With 11,300 fewer manufacturing and food processing jobs in the area since 2006, we are in desperate need of concrete solutions.

We are glad that the Conservatives are promising to act on some new democratic proposals, like banning pay-to-pay billing, and reducing the costs of paying bills for consumers. However, they have made these promises before and Canadians are still waiting for them to follow through. Not long ago, the Conservatives promised to address the problem of high credit card rates. Nothing has happened; credit card interest rates are still unacceptably high.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the federal budget does not meet the needs of Londoners. My constituents cannot afford this do-nothing budget. They are looking for action on accountability and affordability. They are looking for retirement security and the creation of good jobs.

Instead, the Conservatives seem ready to put partisanship first and delay help for families, who are still struggling, until next year, which is conveniently an election year. With thousands more Londoners unemployed today than before the recession, London families need help now. Quite simply, they should not be made to wait until it is politically convenient for the Conservatives.

This is the reason that the NDP has proposed practical, low-cost solutions that would help give families a fair break. These solutions include capping ATM fees, banning pay-to-pay billing, cracking down on payday lenders, reigning in credit card rates, job creation tax credits for youth and small business, bringing back the ecoENERGY home retrofit tax credit, and restoring funding for veterans. We need an increased investment in Service Canada and Veterans Affairs. Both of these services need an increase in the number of skilled staff persons, to address the growing needs of Canadians requiring the services that these offices provide.

Veterans have been clear about what they wanted from this budget. Instead, the Conservatives are pushing ahead with their cuts and closures. The Canadian military is still waiting on medical personnel who specialize in mental health. Promises were made in 2009 and 2012 for more mental health experts for military personnel on bases, promises that have not been met. Military personnel with critical mental health needs, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, are waiting for six months to see a mental health provider. This could become a matter of life and death.

Budgets are about making choices. Instead of attacking the challenges facing Canadian families, the Conservatives are attacking public servants, unions, charities, environmental groups, anyone with a criticism.

We should all give serious consideration to what a federal government is supposed to do. Government is supposed to be the entity that protects communities, builds the economy, supports important public services, and safeguards the vulnerable.

Unfortunately, the Conservative approach to seniors over the past few budgets has focused on tax breaks that only the wealthy can access. The government has seen fit to raise the age of eligibility for OAS and GIS to 67. It is an attack on the vulnerable.

The New Democrats would take a different approach. We have been calling for an increase to the GIS to ensure that seniors would not face retirement in poverty. We have committed to reversing the changes to OAS and GIS and re-establishing the age of 65 for eligibility. Vulnerable seniors cannot hold on until age 67.

The New Democrats have also long called for the government to work with the provinces to negotiate an increase to the CPP, ensuring that all working Canadians have retirement funds on which they can rely. The Conservative government has been clear in its refusal to increase the CPP, leaving many Canadians without retirement security. This budget does not include any indication that the Conservatives would reverse their position. It is indeed a do-nothing budget when it comes to the retirement security of Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be splitting my time with a colleague.

*The Budget*

• (1515)

The new horizons for seniors program was trumpeted in this budget as receiving an increase in funding. However, part of its funding was set to end this year. The increase would be \$5 million per year, the same amount that was set to expire. The so-called increase is not really an increase. It is nothing less than sleight of hand.

These valuable programs enrich the lives of seniors, build community, and contribute to the local economy. Seniors' organizations, such as the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada and the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation, have long called on the government to take action to ensure that seniors are made a priority by the federal government: to negotiate with the provinces to implement the much-needed increase to the CPP and to take action to end senior poverty. However, the Conservative government has failed time and time again on both counts. Canadians deserve better.

Canadians deserve a plan to address the backlogs at Service Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada to ensure fair and timely service for everyone. In this budget, there would be no new money for Service Canada, despite the continued increases to its responsibility to deliver programs.

Canadians deserve more money for Veterans Affairs Canada and the reopening of the Veterans Affairs Canada offices. Our military desperately needs investment in mental health care for our soldiers and our veterans. I am disappointed to see that there would be no investment at all in mental health.

Canadians deserve a strategy for improving the manufacturing and food processing sectors. What we got are further tax reductions for big corporations involved in manufacturing and processing, with tax breaks totalling more than \$60 billion from 2008 to 2014. There was an extension of this measure, for an additional \$1.5 billion. For these profitable big businesses, these tax breaks do not include any guarantee of job creation or any other benefit to our communities. I would say it is a failure to build the economy.

What Canadians deserve is a real jobs strategy that would actually help people get back to work, not more TV commercials offering false hope. We need to hear about real progress with manufacturing, food production and processing, and small business start-up help.

Canadians also deserve a plan to keep our postal service. The current plan for Canada Post will stop doorstep delivery for millions of Canadians, while dramatically increasing postal rates. Ending doorstep delivery is a real threat to vulnerable Canadians with mobility issues, including seniors and people living with disabilities. Hiking the cost of stamps by 59% will hurt overburdened families and small businesses that rely on those mail services.

The Conservatives often say that they want the government to run like a business, but what business survives by making customers pay more to get less? New Democrats believe it is time to modernize Canada Post to better serve Canadians and strengthen the bottom line, but getting there requires innovation, not decimation.

Unfortunately, instead of keeping their promise to protect Canadian consumers, the Conservatives are too busy protecting themselves and their insider friends in the Senate and the PMO.

Canada Post connects Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is an important entity, and it is important to keep that connection and keep it affordable. We can do this. The government could have done it in the budget. Canadians deserve better than a do-nothing budget that tells them to manage with less from a government that does not understand its obligations to the people.

As I said, government exists to look after those who are vulnerable, to create a climate where jobs can be created, to protect communities, and to deliver services. This budget does absolutely none of that. We see layoff after layoff at Service Canada, among the people who provide the services. We have seen veterans offices closed. We have seen tax cuts to corporate entities that do not need them and make huge profits.

We see nothing of significance to the small and medium businesses that are part of our communities, that believe in our communities, and that actually create jobs. There is nothing for the youth. Our young people deserve the opportunity for access to the economy. Small and medium businesses could do that with a tax credit in the budget, but it is not there. That is a travesty.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government is going after \$1.5 billion in savings by asking retired public servants to pay for their pension plan and health plan premiums. These people are already retired. Some will be asked to pay 400% more than what they were paying before. I would like to know what the hon. member thinks of this measure.

[*English*]

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my remarks, the government is about attacks. It has attacked civil servants, veterans, charities, environmental groups, and anyone who has a criticism or a concern. This attack on civil servants is counter-productive. The pension to which they have contributed significantly should be there for their senior years, for when they retire. We know that right now in Canada there are a quarter of a million seniors living below the poverty line, seniors in abject misery. Do we want to add civil servants to that?

Instead of attacking people and attacking pensions, the government should be working to bring all Canadians up to a level where they have a secure and safe pension. It could have done that with the CPP improvements we suggested. It could have done that long ago. It has chosen not to. It has ignored the advice of labour, of the provinces, and of people who are pension experts. It ignored everyone who had something positive to say about pension reform, in favour of this do-nothing budget.

*The Budget*

•(1525)

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague and I are both from the province of Ontario. Given that the Government of Ontario was not at all happy with the budget earlier this week, I would like to give my hon. colleague the opportunity to talk about how she thinks the budget treated Ontario.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, while I have heard concerns voiced by the Province of Ontario, I have to say that I would feel much better if the Province of Ontario managed its funds more wisely. I cannot say that I am particularly impressed with the big corporate tax cuts that the Province of Ontario has given away over the last little while at the expense of the people of Ontario.

However, when we talk about transfers, I think we should talk about what is happening to all the provinces and the fact that the government will transfer \$37 billion less to the provinces for health care. Health care is absolutely the centre of our democracy. It allows Canadians to access services, and the provinces will receive less. It is a very important service, not properly funded.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for her comments and for reminding everyone that we are providing \$5 million to the new horizons program, but I would also like to correct something in regard to her mentioning that the veterans' offices were closing again.

I would like to reiterate that five offices are merging in the exact same building. One office is across the street, one is less than a kilometre away, and the other one is less than four kilometres away. We are actually providing more services to veterans and not closing the offices.

I would like to list some of the other things we are doing for Canadians in helping them with jobs. We are launching the Canada job grant. We are creating the Canada apprenticeship loan. We are launching a job matching service. We have more paid internships for young Canadians, and we are helping older workers get back to work. Those are just some of the things in economic action plan 2014 that we are doing for Canadians.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the so-called \$5 million is sleight of hand; \$5 million was cut, and the Conservatives put \$5 million in. That is not really an increase.

In terms of the so-called expanded sites of service, the reality is that Conservatives have been talking over and over again about 600 Service Canada sites, but they do not have veterans' applications on their website and they do not know how to manage what is really unique to veterans; so this is not an increase of service.

In terms of job grants, it is a matching grant. The province has to kick in, and the employer has to kick in. If they do not, there is no job grant. I am not impressed. I stick by what I said. This is a do-nothing budget. It does not help my constituents.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleagues from the Standing Committee on Finance, the members for Parkdale—High Park and Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, for their constructive contribution to the deliberations we as

members need to engage in today on the 2014 budget and its impacts.

Yesterday, on February 12, I heard the member for Kitchener—Conestoga say that high school students understood the budget better than members of the opposition. The members opposite should perhaps stop talking nonsense. The people of my riding are fed up with seeing their buying power melt like snow in the sunshine while the government fails to take any real action to kick-start the country's economy.

The first question that must be asked is who will be the new victims of this budget? The answer is public service retirees. The government is going to take \$1.5 billion from the health care plan for retired public servants, and then require them to pay higher premiums. For example, based on retirees from my own riding who called and wrote to me, \$42.76 per month will now be withheld, rather than the previous amount of \$10.34 per month in June 2013. This is a difference of \$32.42 per month or \$389 per year, an increase of 413.5%. Why are the Conservatives attacking public service retirees?

The unemployed will also be victims of this budget. There are now 300,000 more unemployed workers than there were before the 2008 recession. This budget, however, is not making any significant investments to create good jobs for the middle class. The NDP has monitored this file closely.

In fact, our leader has said that employment insurance is the most important Canadian labour market program because it provides benefits to replace the income of those who are unemployed to help them and their families, and because it provides Canadians with training and other labour market support measures to help them find a new job. He also mentioned that in view of the fact that Canada's economy and labour market were in constant turmoil, the government needed to ensure that the program would be there for Canadians when they needed it. According to him, the government must also ensure that the program helps to create jobs and economic growth.

Since the changes announced in the 2012 budget, fewer people are now eligible for employment insurance benefits. More of them are now forced to accept low paying jobs and many are redirected to provincial social programs.

Under the Conservatives, access to employment insurance benefits has reached its lowest level ever with fewer than four out of every 10 unemployed workers eligible for benefits. The changes are also harmful to seasonal industries like tourism, fisheries, and the forest and agricultural sectors. Canadian workers and employers pay employment insurance premiums, and the government makes profits off their backs.

*The Budget*

Workforce training will also be affected by the budget because it changes the workforce training rules. The federal government announced that the subsidies for workforce training will be in place on April 1, with or without the agreement of the provinces, even though workforce training is a provincial jurisdiction under an agreement that goes back to the previous century. Clearly they want to impose a new way of doing things. From now on, businesses rather than job seekers will receive support. How can the provinces be forced to be accountable when this is their jurisdiction?

A Canadian employment subsidy will be introduced in 2014. Who will be eligible? Businesses that have a training plan for unemployed and underemployed Canadians, to enable them to find a job or a better job. Every Canadian will be eligible for this subsidy, on one condition: there has to be a partnership with an employer. In other words, they need to find their own job.

In only a few sentences many changes have been introduced. At the moment, the provinces train workers who then re-enter the workforce. The process takes somewhat longer when the prospective worker needs orientation or training before returning to the workforce.

For example, if a 55-year-old worker loses his job after a company shuts down, a new job can be found for him if it is one that is in demand, for example a plumber. However, if the worker decides to shift to a field where demand is low, he will have to be trained for another job. The process will therefore take somewhat longer.

After 10 budgets, the Minister of Finance should make an effort to acquire a better understanding of the term "provincial jurisdiction".

● (1530)

The Minister of Finance complained that the government paid out:

...billions of dollars—not millions, billions—to the provinces to provide skills training to workers for available jobs. Some provinces do not even report the results. We don't even know what they do with the money; so we're going to do better than that, we will get results.

How tactless. I would like to take the liberty of telling the minister about what the provinces are doing in terms of skills training.

First of all, the whole process involves employers, management, unions and the education sector. They are all working toward integrating potential workers into the labour force. Targets are set for integrating those with disabilities, young people, immigrants and women. Older workers who must find a job and business services are also included.

If the minister really wants to know what is happening in terms of skills training in the provinces, I would strongly advise him to consult the Internet and use Google to look up "Emploi Quebec" or "Employment Ontario". No private enterprise is as transparent. He can find regional action plans, guidelines and strategies used to meet the challenges and achieve results.

The victims of this budget are families. I would like to bring up the issue of income splitting for families with dependents under the

age of 18. Keep in mind that it was one of the Conservatives' promises in the last election.

The term "income splitting" describes the ability of spouses to divide their total taxable family income for tax purposes in order to reduce their total family income tax liability. Because of the progressive nature of the Canadian tax system, the higher-income spouse may be taxed at a higher marginal tax rate than the lower-income spouse. By splitting their total taxable income, some couples would benefit from a lower effective tax rate.

For instance, the average federal tax savings for two-parent families with children, earning less than \$30,000 annually, and with one parent earning from 0% to 10% of family income, would total \$120. On the other hand, if the family earns \$90,000 or more, the couple would save \$3,276.

In Canada, the gap between rich and poor is widening. If income splitting were to help narrow this gap, we might support it, but in reality, the rich will benefit more than the poor. The C.D. Howe Institute has stated that 85% of households would gain nothing from an income-splitting provision.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I have rarely seen a budget that is as dull as this one and that provides no measures to help families and workers make the two ends meet.

● (1535)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on an issue that is very important out west, in particular to our prairie provinces, the issue of grain and the movement of grain.

A great number of wheat farmers were quite disappointed that the government did not recognize the fact we have piles of wheat sitting not only in steel bins but also in fields that need to get from the Prairies to the west coast where we have empty ships waiting to receive the wheat. The sense is that the government has failed them. The wheat farmers have not been able to ensure that infrastructure is there to transport that wheat. We have known about this for months.

Would the member want to comment on how important it is for the Minister of Finance in a budget to deal with crises in the nation? I use what is happening in the Prairies as one such crisis. We have a crisis in the Prairies dealing with tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions, of dollars worth of wheat product, and the government has dropped the ball on this particular issue. The member might want to comment.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Mr. Speaker, the member's comment is completely accurate. You would think the budget came right out of a play by Ionesco.

In western Canada, grain needs to be moved and delivered, but the budget mentions pipelines, gas, the oil sands and natural gas, and ignores a huge part of the economy.

*The Budget*

If the Conservatives were really taking care of the business economy, they would help these types of infrastructure. Instead, they are interfering in something that does not concern them and setting up an agency to provide funding for skills training, even though that is under provincial jurisdiction.

This is the government's area of jurisdiction, and its budget must provide for the possibility of taking action in these types of situations. That is what taxes are for.

• (1540)

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to the budget, there is a surplus exceeding \$6 billion in the employment insurance fund, yet the government is restricting access and preventing people who have no jobs from getting benefits.

Given that together, the Liberals and the Conservatives stole \$57 billion from the employment insurance fund, I would like my colleague to comment on the fact that even though this arrogant government wrote in its own budget that the employment insurance fund has a surplus exceeding \$6 billion, it is still restricting access to employment insurance for people who really need it and who have no jobs.

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day:** Mr. Speaker, we know that the Liberals and the Conservatives diverted \$57 billion from the fund. A few years ago, in 2012, there was a surplus of \$3.1 billion. That money came from employer and employee contributions to employment insurance. Now we are talking about a \$6 billion surplus. Once again, all of this money goes into the consolidated revenue fund. Honestly, that is what I call stealing. The government did it by restricting access to employment insurance. The fewer unemployed workers they have knocking on the door asking for benefits, the lower the unemployment rate is. The lower the unemployment rate in a particular region, the fewer weeks of benefits people can claim. It is all connected, and that is why the surplus is going up.

The government did not raise taxes, but it is collecting money from a specific segment of the population and funnelling that money into the consolidated revenue fund. Employers and employees are being fleeced.

[English]

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is, indeed, a pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituency to speak on budget 2014.

Before I start, I will point out that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, I travel a lot around the world representing Canada. Everywhere I go, I am always asked, "What did Canada do? How did you avoid the major ramifications of the recession that hit Europe, the Americans, and everyone?" It was because of the sound management this government provided under the leadership of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, as well as other cabinet members.

Let us look at the bigger picture since 2006. The Liberals and NDP keep complaining. All we hear from them is spend, spend, spend. It is nitpicking. The real picture is this. Since taking office in 2006, we made sure that the GST was cut from 7% to 5%, that taxes were reduced, that income splitting was established, and that we created a tax-free savings account. We worked to ensure that Canadians had more money in their pockets, because more money in the pockets of Canadians is of greater benefit to consumers and the economy than having fat government programs like the NDP and Liberals keep saying we need.

The other point is that the government went through the exercise of cutting unnecessary expenses. There were reductions in expenditure areas that it was felt were not doing anything necessary for the country.

The combination of both of these things is where we stand today. As the finance minister said, by 2015 we will have balanced the budget. This would not happen if none of these measures were taken. The balancing of the budget allows us to have more money for the programs that we consider important, like health care, social services, and other critically important programs that Canadians want. Today, we stand at a threshold where the budget is going to be balanced.

In all of the speeches that the NDP and Liberals have made, we have not heard anything about balancing the budget. I remember when I came here, the Liberals were touting that they were going to balance the budget. Mr. Martin tried to balance the budget by cutting transfers to the provinces, which we did not do. We provided the necessary atmosphere in the economy for the economy to move forward and to create over a million jobs.

We are also working hard to ensure that people are working. That is what Canadians want. Therefore, this budget, after all of this, is based on getting people to work. I just heard the NDP and Liberals over there talking about EI surpluses and that there will be cuts. The important thing is getting people to work, that the people who have finished their schooling and apprenticeships all go to work, so this government decided to do that. There is now more money given to people so they can become apprentices. There is no point in getting a lot of foreign workers to do these jobs when we can train Canadians to do them, including those graduating high school.

This budget, through the Minister of Employment and Social Development, is focused on how to get Canadians work. The more Canadians work, the more taxes they pay, and the more consumer spending there will be. It is better for the economy in the long run. It is simple mathematics and economics that the NDP should know.

Most importantly, Canada is a resource-rich country. We are a trading nation. We have some of the best practices for mining and resource extraction. People from across the world come here to see how we do these things.

*The Budget*

● (1545)

When I travel overseas, I go to newly developed countries like Mongolia and Tanzania, countries whose extractive sectors are now coming in. They look to us, and we tell them to come to Canada and look at our regulations, which they can then apply back in their countries so that they can have the benefit of natural resources for their citizens.

This is the key message that we give out. Countries listen to us. I just returned from Ethiopia. Its mining sector is interested in seeing Canada's best practices, because it has identified Canada as one of the best places where the resource sector is properly utilized to the benefit of its people.

The resource sector needs to be developed. We find it very strange that the same people on the other side who are getting up and saying that they want this expenditure and that expenditure, and that things are bad and everything, are the ones who oppose the pipeline, which would take our resources to markets around the world.

Canada is one of the best places. Yes, there is always room for improvement. The NDP members are usually stopping things from happening. They are getting up and saying no on trade deals. They say no on resource extraction. They say no on everything. I do not know where they think the money comes from. Only the NDP members know where this money will come from to meet all the needs of the excellent programs we have.

It is important to note that our government has not cut critical programs that are needed. We will refocus the resources we have to the areas where they will be productive, where Canadians will get the most benefit. That is what responsible government is all about. Responsible government is not about standing up and throwing money here and there, as the NDP would do.

At the same time, the government is very proud of having signed trade deals around the world, FIPA agreements and trade deals. This will allow our companies to go out and do what they are best at doing: sell their products and services, which are very good.

The free trade agreement with the European Union and the NAFTA, these are all beneficial to businesses. They are all excited. This is the economy expanding, and an expanding economy means better jobs for Canadians; and better jobs for Canadians mean more money in the economy, which all goes towards ensuring a better future for Canadians, young and old. Let us not forget the seniors who rely on many of the programs we have.

I give full credit to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for this budget. They have chosen this path and we are now standing proudly to say that we will balance the budget in 2015. What more could people want?

The criticism we are hearing is that we are doing this because an election year is coming, or that it is a no-show budget, or that it is a boring budget. I would rather have a boring budget if it means we are staying on track and that by 2015 we will have a balanced budget with a surplus. We have worked for that since forming government in 2006.

● (1550)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have to point out a couple of things in the parliamentary secretary's comments.

The previous government used to have a parlour trick, in which it would look at the estimates and say that the surplus was going to be  $x$ , and it would be  $y$ . Of course it would be a lot more than it had initially predicted.

We put the Parliamentary Budget Officer in place, and we worked with the government to do that.

Now there is a new parlour trick, and actually Kevin Page identified it. It goes like this: the government does not actually spend the money that Parliament assigns. So we have \$300 million in foreign affairs that was not spent, to help things like the START program to help South Sudan. We have programs that were actually needed for Canadians, and money for them is not being spent. Then the government invites us to see how well it is doing.

We have \$7 billion booked in this budget that is coming out of the pockets of public servants here in Ottawa. This is some magical, great financial wizardry.

The government cannot even procure defence equipment, so it has to kick the can of \$3 billion ahead.

What I am laying out here is the basis for the question to my colleague. There is no great financial management here. This budget had a lot of references to the previous budget.

How can the parliamentary secretary stand there and actually look people in the eye and say the government did a good job of managing when it cannot even fulfill the promises and expectations of the last budget, and when it cannot procure defence equipment, and when it is doing the budget savings, surplus, and deficit on the backs of everyday people?

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, let me look at the member directly and tell him that I am absolutely proud of what we have done and what we are going to achieve. He said I should feel ashamed. Absolutely not; I am absolutely happy to say that.

Now, let us go back to the other question and see how they twist things. He is talking about the \$3 billion for defence. This is a capital expenditure. Does he really think that the planes we want to buy are just sitting there, that we just need to write a cheque and the planes will come in? They need to be built. After they have been built, then the money is allocated. Therefore, that money is sitting there, waiting to be allocated. When those capital expenditures are ready, we will buy them. Look at how they are twisting the facts, saying that it is a mistake.

As for all the other ones, he needs to recognize that there was a recession in 2008.

By the way, the budget officer was appointed by this government. It is this government that went ahead and appointed him.

We have nothing to be ashamed of. We are as transparent as anything.

*The Budget*

Let us celebrate the fact that by 2015 we will have a balanced budget.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have just a general question because I know my hon. colleague has been in this House for a while. In reading the budget document, the book that is about this thick, I find it hard to sort out what is new and what is old.

I wonder why the government does not make it a bit clearer in the document, so that average Canadians reading it can see what is new and what was already announced a year ago.

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, let us look at the bigger picture. Let me tell members that I am very glad that we have a skinny little booklet to say these things. We used to get fancy books over there. This way, at least we do not need to spend too much money on this thing.

To the point, let me say that since coming into power, gradually working it out, the bottom line is that, today, we have matching programs for jobs. Most important, we will be able to balance the budget in 2015. We have been giving tax breaks of almost \$3,000 to every Canadian family in this country over that period of time. If that is not sound management, I have not the foggiest idea what this guy thinks sound management is.

• (1555)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I will address the question to the hon. parliamentary secretary that I have been trying to put to previous speakers, so I hope he will bear with me.

I will start with this quote, "...perhaps the greatest threat to confront the future of humanity today", describing climate change. That is a quote from the Prime Minister, in 2007.

Another quote is from the Secretary General to the World Commission on Environment and Development, Jim MacNeill, a Canadian, a global diplomat, who said the single "most important environmental...statement" from any government is its budget.

Here we are in 2014. The Prime Minister said it was the single biggest threat to confront the future of humanity today. He said that seven years ago. Environment Canada now reports that, against the Copenhagen target—a commitment to reduce by 130 megatonnes of greenhouse gases by 2020—we will reduce by three megatons. This target was not taken on by a previous Liberal government, but taken on by the Prime Minister in Copenhagen in 2009. That is a complete failure.

Would the parliamentary secretary explain how the government can put forward a document, in 2014, that does not use the words "climate change", "carbon", or "greenhouse gases" and has no measures to reduce them?

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, I will not agree with the Green Party to say that we are going to put a carbon tax out here. No, we are not.

However, the Minister of the Environment has stated quite clearly on many occasions that, yes, we are addressing the issue of climate change. We always attend all the conferences where climate change is on the agenda.

However, it is a global issue that everybody should be part and parcel of it, not just Canada. So, we will continue working with our allies, the rest of the countries, to address the issue of climate change.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand up here today and speak to our economic action plan 2014. I also want to congratulate the Minister of Finance on again having a budget that is absolutely right for Canada in these times.

Today I will talk about the context, because I think it is important. People are hearing about the measures that are in the budget, but I need to set the stage for the debate in terms of the context, going back to 2009.

I do want to make one comment. Certainly our approach is not the NDP approach of raising taxes and having myriad programs for which it wants to use the money of everyday Canadians.

Unlike the Liberals, we know we need a long-term plan. We need a plan. The budget does not actually balance itself by magic, but it balances itself through a lot of hard work, a lot of thinking, and creating a plan.

I will demonstrate where we are today and why this plan is working; so throughout my speech, I will take very liberally from some of the past budget speeches given by the Minister of Finance, because as we go from 2009 to 2010, we will see the very dramatic things that were happening in our history, and indeed, the global recession impacting the entire world.

First, I go back to January 27, 2009. I was a newly elected MP at the time. I was elected in 2008. The government previous to that had been paying down the debt, and to give the Liberals their due, they had paid down some debt, and we continued on that path. We paid down, I believe, close to \$39 billion in debt in the first two years.

In 2008-2009 we recognized we were heading into some very challenging times across the world. These are some quotes from the speech of January 27, 2009.

Since last fall, the global economic situation has deteriorated further and faster than anyone predicted...

Canadians are feeling the effects of the global recession, and they are concerned. They are concerned about their jobs and their savings. They are concerned about their families, their businesses, and their communities....

...we must do what it takes to keep our economy moving and to protect Canadians during this extraordinary time.

Back in 2009, in response to the global recession, it was the industrialized countries that agreed they needed to take unprecedented action.

I often hear, again, the opposition members talking out of both sides of their mouths, because I remember at that time they were saying we should spend more, spend more. Then they would say we had a debt. They cannot have it both ways. They cannot say to spend more and then criticize the debt.

*The Budget*

It truly was a very difficult time, and so the Government of Canada and the Minister of Finance made the deliberate choice to run a substantial, short-term deficit. It was a temporary deficit, and it was an investment that was to stimulate our economy and to meet the short-term needs while serving the long-term goals.

It is also important to note that Canada, unlike the United States and Europe, did not enter this very difficult time with a heavy deficit, like the other countries; so we really had more capacity within Canada to respond to the risk we were facing.

We also said at that time that we would not be running a permanent deficit, that as the economy recovered, we fully expected to emerge from deficit and return to surplus. It was also said that Canadians regretted the need to run a deficit in order to invest in our economy and the government also shared that regret.

That sets the stage for 2009, a very difficult time, and a purposeful decision was made.

A year and a couple of months later—again I will take liberally from the speech at the time—the minister rose in the House and said:

...our nation is at a crossroads. We have passed through steep and rocky terrain. Much of the territory was uncharted. We were prepared and we protected ourselves. We are making our way through, and our compass has not failed us.

The way forward remains challenging. Some would urge us to turn at this crossroads. Experience tells us that this would eventually lead us backward. We need to keep helping those who need a hand up. We need to stay on course.

We can see our destination on the horizon.

●(1600)

It is important to note that there were many international institutions that were failing at that time, but they were not failing in Canada. Stock markets around the world had plunged deeply, and for a time the whole global financial system was at risk of shutting down. However, we worked in partnership with the G7 and G20 in terms of an effective coordinated response.

These numbers are going to be important as I go through my comments. In July 2009, Canada had generated 135,000 net new jobs, and at the same time the U.S. was continuing to lose jobs. Let us go another year, to March 22, 2011, and Canada was emerging from this recession as one of the world's top performing economies. Compared to other countries, Canada's economy was performing very well, but our continued recovery was by no means assured. We had a plan. It was working. We needed to stay on the track.

We were looking at additional targeted investments to support jobs and growth, but we also committed to tackle government spending and eliminate the deficit. We also indicated that we were not going to do that like the Liberals did, through cuts to transfers for health care and education and imposing massive tax increases. We now had 480,000 net new jobs, more than were lost in the recession.

It was at that time that the opposition decided that we did not have a plan that was working. We took it to the Canadian public. The Canadian public gave us a strong, stable Conservative majority government because they believed in this plan to move forward. We then introduced a very similar budget, I believe it was almost word-for-word, on June 6, 2011.

I have to note, again, in the few short months between when the budget was presented and the election was called and the next budget

was presented, we were at 540,000 jobs that had been created since July 2009. That was the height of the recession. And, we had seven quarters of positive GDP growth.

Heading into March 2012, of course, Canadians had every reason to be confident. Other western countries faced the risk of long-term economic decline. Our goal was to strengthen the financial security of Canadian workers and families, and to help create good jobs and prosperity in every region of the country. We also looked toward positioning our country as dynamic, moving forward, and able to compete. We were then at 610,000 net new jobs. Again, this was a year later. We saw very important improvements.

At this point, we were looking for innovation. We needed to plan for a rapidly aging population to secure our long-term prosperity. Again, that does not sound like magical wishful thinking. We have an aging populations and we needed to create a plan to help our country move through the challenges that it faces

At that time, we were on track. We had cut the deficit in half. We did this by doing exactly what the finance minister said when he introduced the economic action plan: the stimulus spending.

He then ended it. I know it is often very difficult to end stimulus measures because it is very popular. However, it was temporary, and he did take the steps necessary to look at controlling the growth of new spending. We made the commitment to implement some moderate restraint in government spending, with the vast majority coming from eliminating waste in the internal operation of the government to make it leaner and more efficient.

Finally, at that time we were looking at ambitious trade expansion. I only have a minute left, and this is such a great story. On March 20, 2013, we were at 950,000 new jobs. We were taking strong decisive action, which was required, but we were moving forward as per the plan.

I would suggest to the opposition members that if they look at that history, what our finance minister indicated was going to happen has moved along directly. Obviously, there were some twists and turns along the way because there were factors outside of our control, but we have been at the reins. We have been guiding things.

●(1605)

I am proud of our record. I am proud to see that we are approaching a balanced budget, and I look forward to a balanced budget in 2015-16.

The measures that we see in the budget this year are targeted toward those important strategic investments that would continue to leave Canada prosperous and in the great position it has in the world.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to begin, I would like to thank the hon. member opposite for her speech.



*The Budget*

I would like to ask her why there is no mention of climate change in the budget. Climate change and sustainable development are a priority for the NDP. In that regard, I hope that tomorrow everyone will tune in to the second hour of debate on Bill C-481 at second reading, which will put sustainable development in the spotlight in the House of Commons.

On that note, I would like to quote the Conservative member for Kitchener—Waterloo. On January 6, on CBC, he said: “We are seeing the effects, the impacts of climate change. With climate change comes extreme weather events. We saw that through the floods in southern Alberta, we’re now seeing that with the ice storms in Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto”.

Those are wise words. We need to take urgent action because, simply put, we have only one planet Earth. It is all well and good to balance the budget and have election strategies, as some are saying, but we need to protect our planet.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that in past budgets we have had measures around climate change and navigable waters, yet we had been heavily criticized by the opposition members who said the budget should be about the budget and that these were omnibus budgets.

Now that we have a budget that is focused on some important budgetary measures, I would suggest that the hon. member go to the Government of Canada's website on the environment. He would see that there is an important and strategic plan. The goals are there. We are looking at how we would go ahead in terms of our environmental commitment to Canadians.

Again, I must point out the dichotomy of the two different positions. In one minute we are criticized for having it in, and now we are criticized for not having it in.

• (1610)

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my Conservative colleague for her review of the government's stimulus of the economy during and following the 2008-09 great recession. However, I am reminded of an article in *The Globe and Mail* this past weekend that talked about how billions of dollars were wasted in that stimulus.

This is not meant as a criticism. However, given the member's recounting of the history, I want to ask whether she thinks it would be a good idea to do what was suggested by Martin Shubik, an economist in the United States, and also by Michael Mackenzie here in Canada, which is to have an independent panel that maintains a list of pre-evaluated public works projects. Therefore, if a recession hits and we need to provide stimulus, we would have a list of quality, non-partisan, economically viable projects that are ready for stimulus. Would that be a good way to avoid wasting billions of dollars in the hurried stimulus of the next economic recession?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I would point out that Canada was not alone. We were with the G20 nations in terms of this economic action plan.

I would also point out that the Auditor General gave an incredibly favourable report. It was unprecedented in the history of Canada to

have such a positive response to our economic action plan and economic stimulus.

When I look at the important projects in my riding, not only did they create jobs, they have created valuable infrastructure for the citizens of those communities.

We have a list of infrastructure projects from our municipalities right now, which we know very well will keep us going for a long time in terms of what we need to do moving forward.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before I start, I would like to indicate that I will be sharing my time with the excellent member for Montcalm.

When I first looked at the budget, I did so from a local and regional perspective. The first thing I noticed was that there was nothing for the Quebec City region or my riding of Louis-Hébert in the budget. None of the federal government's sectors of activity had anything for the Quebec Bridge, the episodes of red dust in Limoilou or the Davie shipyard or anything to reassure our city's seniors, who should continue having door-to-door postal delivery instead of having to go out in winter. There was nothing for pension plans, even though our society has a growing population of seniors.

My riding has a university and two other post-secondary institutions. There was nothing for post-secondary education in the way of provincial transfers. There was nothing about that. There was nothing for basic research. There was mention of applied research and industrial research. However, basic research is the basis for the wealth of our future society. I saw nothing about that.

I would like to talk a little about the Quebec Bridge, which is in my riding. Over the past nine years, this government has spent more than \$400,000 on legal expenses. However, I did not see anything in the budget about that. In 2005, the Prime Minister gave a speech to the Quebec City chamber of commerce. He promised to take the paint brush away from the Liberals in order to get the bridge painted. Nine years and four ministers later, they are still looking for the brush.

The Conservatives have cloned the Liberals' incompetence. One might say that the older the government gets, the more it likes to copy the Liberals. That is how it goes.

I would remind members that, during the last election, the government's slogan was “Our region in power”. What have the Conservative members from the greater Quebec City area done for the area in the budget? The answer is nothing.

Let us get back to the budget. We were told that the deficit is \$2.9 billion. That is a false deficit because there is a \$3 billion provision on the books. We are seeing once again the ploy used by Paul Martin when he was the finance minister. By underestimating the ability to have a budget surplus, all of a sudden, at the end of the year, they look like good managers. It is going to happen.

The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has said in a television interview that we already had a virtual balanced budget. It is in fact quite real. I hope the Minister of Finance will not needlessly borrow that \$3 billion from the reserve fund to make taxpayers needlessly pay interest. I hope he does not do that.

*The Budget*

The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness said something else that was interesting. He said that a government should serve only to create wealth. I am sorry, but it should serve its citizens, first and foremost. Creating wealth is part of serving the people.

As a final point, I would like to draw the attention of the House to another aspect of this budget. As my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles said, many people are paying so that this government can achieve a balanced budget. Retired public servants are one example. Taking \$1.5 billion away from people who are no longer working is rather meanspirited. It is petty and it is shameful. There are no words strong enough, not even unparliamentary ones, to describe how meanspirited that is. When you have reached the point of stealing from people on a fixed income, whose incomes are actually going down, when you achieve a surplus on the backs of people like that, that is petty.

In my riding alone, there are 679 retired public servants.

• (1615)

In the greater Quebec City area, 7,200 retirees will get a taste of this shameful plan; in Quebec, the total is 34,000 and, in Canada, 186,000.

Is this how the government treats those who have made our federal public service an international model? When you work and you have a pension plan, a portion of your salary is deferred for your pension, meaning that you will get the money later. Is the government's idea to have an agreement with workers and then turn around and say that the agreement no longer applies? What is this way of thinking?

The government's attitude toward job training is equally shameful. The government made an announcement on this matter in last year's budget, but it did not follow through with it. In fact, the provinces are opposed to it. The government has needlessly spent \$2.5 million of taxpayers' money on a program that does not exist. Now it says that it will have constructive discussions for six weeks and that it will still move forward with the program on April 1st.

Actually, this is what the Minister of Finance had to say about it:

Job training in Canada is not provincial tax money; it's federal tax money. And it's not for a provincial government to tell the federal government how to spend federal tax money.

However, this is an area of provincial jurisdiction. This government has always boasted about respecting jurisdictions, but now it jumps in with both feet for the sake of its ideology. That is completely unacceptable.

That is why the NDP stated, in the Sherbrooke declaration, that any province can opt out of a program with full compensation in those types of situations. I therefore urge this government to uphold the principles set out in the Sherbrooke declaration. It is important for us and for everyone.

For the Liberals, a budget writes itself. For the Conservatives, it is an accounting exercise in which figures that must balance are compared. This cold-blooded accounting exercise could not care less about the consequences for Canadians.

While it is true that they are balancing the budget, people are going to have to pay. This is not being done properly. A budget should benefit ordinary people. It should help people, help companies grow, help create jobs and help young people study and achieve their full potential. It should support seniors and help farmers.

Is there anything like that in this budget? Not at all. It is nothing more than an unfeeling accounting exercise. No one studied the consequences or thought about the people who will pay the price or the purpose of the budget.

The parliamentary secretary spoke about history just now, and I would like to do the same. As part of the cuts made to the various departments, 300 food inspection jobs were eliminated. What is more, we witness the largest food recall in Canada's history.

Today, the government solves problems by simply making announcements. It makes cuts randomly and haphazardly without looking at the consequences and then transforms that into a budget announcement. This is unacceptable.

A budget should give hope to Canadians. We should be able to live a healthy life, teach our young people, think about the future and invest in research so that our companies can innovate and prosper. A government is not a publicly traded corporation that has to balance the books at the end of the fiscal year.

• (1620)

A government should take a sustainable development approach to society in all its aspects and have an employment strategy, rather than simply an exercise to fill vacant positions. That is why I deplore the fact that this government has chosen the path of confrontation and come up with a budget that is just laying the groundwork for the next election.

On behalf of the people of Louis-Hébert, I deplore the fact that in this budget no mention is made of the landmark that is the Quebec Bridge.

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent and very passionate speech.

A few words from his speech stood out for me. He said that the budget is an obsession with an accounting exercise that is void of emotion. Balancing the budget is indeed an obsession for our friends opposite.

We in the NDP propose to make life as affordable as possible for consumers and Canadians.

Can my colleague explain how the NDP will make life more affordable in 2015?

**Mr. Denis Blanchette:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question. That is what my speech was actually all about.

In addition to passing legislation, the budget is a significant part of the work that we do in the House. It is supposed to be a tool that helps people grow. Among other things, this means that, for life to be affordable, we do not want interest rates to be exorbitant.

*The Budget*

We know that Canadians have too much debt. It is important to support them in paying off their personal debts. We hear about the government's debt, but the debt of Canadians is conveniently forgotten. The NDP is proposing a whole host of measures.

For instance, I am thinking about the fees that seniors have to pay just to receive paper invoices or to use a bank machine. These are all simple, inexpensive measures that allow people to get value for their money.

• (1625)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on one aspect of the budget that the government has unfortunately not addressed, and that is the issue of citizenship.

It is going to become more difficult for an individual to get Canadian citizenship. It is also going to become much more costly. There are 1.5 million landed immigrants here in Canada. Ultimately we want them to become citizens of Canada, but they are going to pay a lot more money to get their citizenship as a direct result of the Conservative government. They will have to pay somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$300 or \$400. As well, they will have to get IELTS testing done, and the government is expanding the age for this testing from 54 to 60. The Conservatives seem to have missed the mark.

There has been a huge increase in the backlog. Even after someone qualifies for Canadian citizenship, he or she has to wait another two or three years. It seems to me that the government should be speeding up the process so that when individuals qualify for citizenship, they will not have to wait for two or three years, and possibly far longer, to acquire it.

I wonder if the member could comment on that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, which points to a major issue: the way the public administration is managed.

The public administration plays an important role in service delivery. However, the government has made significant spending cuts in the past few years. It would seem that the Conservatives are so obsessed with making cuts in order to make government leaner and more nimble that they have forgotten the purpose of service delivery.

With regard to the immigration backlog, it is important to point out that those people are living in hope, because they want to make a positive contribution to our society. They encounter obstacles not because of malice, but because the government does not know how to manage the process properly. In fact, it is really a question of incompetence in case management.

If the government had its priorities in the right place, it would be able to help those people contribute to our society much more quickly.

**Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying something that seems obvious to me. This budget, which is supposed to represent Canada's economic action plan for 2014, does not give me any hope that the people in the

Montcalm riding will be making any progress. In fact, it seems to me rather that it is condemning my region to inertia and postponing its economic health until next year. The Conservatives did not even bother to hide their vote-seeking intentions.

Unfortunately, under the Conservatives we have become used to these kinds of schemes that are detrimental to the working men and women who are propping up our economy and families that are more in debt than ever and that ignore regions that do not hold much political influence. They are fostering political cynicism and backroom wrangling, at the expense of the democratic debate on which Canada's traditions are based. Canadians deserve better—it is as simple as that. The Conservatives' attitude is irresponsible, and the government is clearly showing that its re-election is by far the number one priority on its agenda. Recently, we heard a throne speech that was based on the government's alleged desire to better protect consumers and serve their interests.

In light of the ever more stringent requirements of the business and corporate sectors, Canadians expect to be properly represented in Ottawa. The least we can say is that the government is still a long way from meeting the minimum needs of Canadian consumers. To protect consumers, more than hot air is needed.

First of all, there must be an environmental protection agency that has the power to act. Second, there must be a monitoring agency for food products that has both the power and the staff to guarantee Canadians that what they are eating is fit for human consumption. Third, there must be researchers and scientists who write reports on the impact of industrial development and the best way of ensuring that the future will be as profitable as current and past endeavours have been. The machinery of government must serve each and every Canadian objectively and without ideological fanaticism.

Are the Conservatives afraid of the machinery of government? Do they not understand how things are supposed to work?

With this budget, the Conservatives have an opportunity to correct a number of problems, problems that they themselves caused. If they are so concerned about being re-elected, they should make a sincere effort to implement effective measures that will make the voters happy.

Do I have to repeat this? The NDP has put forward numerous appropriate solutions to the daily struggles Canadian families face. The NDP has repeatedly offered to work with the government to alleviate the economic burden on Canadians.

There have been approximately 300,000 jobs lost in Canada since before the recession, and this budget gives us very little hope that the trend can be reversed. The Conservative government has missed a golden opportunity to alleviate some of the burden on Canadian families, and its action plan does not address the situation of the most vulnerable Canadians. In fact, the budget does not contain any new investment to create high-quality jobs and lets the increase in the number of precarious jobs help Canada's employment statistics look better than they really are. In light of the record youth unemployment rate, the government has missed an opportunity to correct the situation and give young Canadians a brighter future. As shameful as this might be, the budget does not contain a single measure to help the vast majority of young Canadians.

*The Budget*

The NDP will not leave anyone out. We prefer to spread hope rather than the Conservative ideology, which keeps on digging an ever deeper hole for the prospect of a better future for thousands of people who are turned off by cheap partisan politics.

The Conservatives are suggesting to Canadians that they hang in there. They seem to be less and less able to understand the issues people face. When they claim that they do, they rarely put their money where their mouth is. We were happy that the government seemed open to the measures put forward by the NDP, such as banning exorbitant fees for bank transactions and lowering the disproportionate interest rates charged by some credit companies, that is, saving Canadians money by limiting unreasonable practices.

● (1630)

It is not just the tax system that has an impact on Canadians' assets. Sound management is always welcome. However, the government has to do more and do better. The government is promising to act, but it is very difficult for us to trust the government after so many broken promises. As usual, we will keep a very close eye on it. We will force it to be accountable, if it does not keep its word again.

Let us face it, this year's budget is nothing but window dressing. It is more style than substance for individuals.

I am still wondering how they can possibly think they will be able to tackle the 25% difference in prices between products sold here and those sold in the United States. It is a nice thought, but they do not say how they are going to pull off this coup. It seems to be just smoke and mirrors.

The government has brought down a typically Conservative budget, a budget that is to its own advantage and that, despite its repeated failures in this regard, again focuses on reducing the deficit and the debt, even though it is one of the lowest in the developed world.

In fueling this obsession, the Conservatives have forgotten that the main goal is to allow taxpayers to keep as much money as they can. In addition, they do not seem to understand that it is money from ordinary Canadians that has made Canada one of the richest countries in the world. It is not the banks or natural resource development or huge financial corporations that contribute the most to our communal pot, but rather individuals, people like us.

It would have been a good time to loosen the reins a bit; it would have been a good idea to shelve their ideology and use some common sense. The simple, effective and inexpensive measures proposed by the NDP would have been well received, but apparently this government thinks electoral imperatives are more important than sound governance.

Balance as a concept implies that a number of elements must be balanced. Even though they say this budget is balanced, I am puzzled to see that it has shelved a number of policies that could have helped offset a number of the inequities that are irritants for Canadians.

Allow me to say that the residents of Mascouche will not be very happy with this budget. The people of Saint-Lin—Laurentides, Saint-Jacques, Sainte-Julienne, Saint-Calixte, Saint-Roch, Saint-

Esprit, Saint-Alexis, Saint-Liguori and Sainte-Marie-Salomé, all these residents in the great riding of Montcalm will be left in limbo. They were expecting something better, but this budget has disappointment written all over it. The government is letting down people who had confidence in it, and they will not soon forget the sacrifices that the government has forced them to make.

I will use my remaining two minutes to talk about my file on disability issues.

The pile of complaints in my office from agencies working with the disabled is growing. These agencies do not have the same funding capabilities as other organizations for able-bodied professionals, that is, universities and health centres, primarily because their clients are some of the poorest and the most marginalized people in Canadian society.

Nevertheless, because of their structure and the funds they receive, these agencies attach great importance to providing services to the disabled and to making fundamental changes.

The changes made by the federal government to the funding formulas for national organizations working with the disabled have put real pressure on these agencies. This will have a direct impact on services and assistance for the disabled. Less support will be given to their network, and jobs held by the disabled will be lost, support services will be eliminated and there will be less help for the disabled and for those who are the most vulnerable and underserved people in the disabled community.

I think I still have a little bit of time. I will just say a word about our veterans. After getting rid of some regional points of service for veterans throughout the country, the government is persisting in offering them online services. This is not what the veterans need. They need to speak to a real person. There is no new money for the veterans and there is no commitment to reopen Veterans Affairs regional offices.

● (1635)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before continuing with questions and comments, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that questions to be raised at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou, Health; the hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Rail Transportation; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Library and Archives Canada.

[English]

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the member's comments on disabilities because a fairly important issue affecting all Canadians was recently decided upon. Canada Post now wants to make significant changes, for example, ending door-to-door letter carrier services. It is interesting; the CEO at the time said it allows people to get exercise, as if that is a justification for ending it.

*The Budget*

When the member referred to individuals with disabilities, the other component that came to my mind right away was seniors. There are many vulnerable people within society and the cancellation of door-to-door delivery services will have an even more profound impact on them. Allowing Canada Post to do this is something the government seems bent on supporting, when in fact Canada Post over the last decade has made hundreds of millions of dollars. It has been an outstanding corporation and there really is no need to make that change.

Perhaps the member could bring a disability perspective concerning Canada Post's decision to end this important service to Canadians.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Manon Perreault:** Mr. Speaker, I find that absolutely appalling. I have said it before in an adjournment debate, but I will repeat it nonetheless. It is inhuman to tell disabled people that they have to walk along an icy sidewalk to fetch their mail. Everyone knows that it makes no sense. It will certainly be a hardship for them.

I called Canada Post personally and spoke with a woman there, who told me that in order to accommodate persons with disabilities, they are going to be offered a second key for their mailbox which they can give to a neighbour willing to pick up their mail at the same time as their own. If the neighbour asks them for money to do so, then people who generally have very little money will have to pay to receive their mail.

Canada Post also told me that there was a special service for persons with disabilities and that mail could be delivered to their home on request. I tested this out twice, in Sainte-Marie-Salomé and Saint-Jacques. It has been over a week and a half now, and I am still awaiting a reply. I can only guess that there is no such service.

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Montcalm, first of all for her speech, but also for the work she is doing in her riding and on behalf of persons with disabilities. She is a source of inspiration.

I very much appreciated what she said in her speech. In my district, we sense the same discouragement among people who have been talking about the budget since it was announced. For example, the mayor of Gatineau told us that the budget was disappointing in several respects, particularly on social housing and infrastructure. He had great expectations for social housing subsidies, which are desperately needed in every Canadian city, but there is nothing for that. The same is true for infrastructure. People working for community agencies had a great deal of hope for social housing, and they too are discouraged. There are many retirees in the riding of Gatineau who are discouraged because of the frequent unilateral changes made to their conditions and agreements. It is shameful.

My colleague spoke about it, but I wonder if the need is as critical in Montcalm as it is in Gatineau.

**Ms. Manon Perreault:** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to reply to my colleague.

When we talk about a budget, we are talking about choices. This morning, I was speaking with a man from my riding by the name of Jean-Guy, who told me that he did not want to see a passive budget.

He was particularly keen on seeing the government take action to make life more affordable and to reduce the excessive cost of everything. He wanted to look forward to a secure retirement and to see job creation for young people, neither of which were addressed in the budget. It is deplorable.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

There is a lot to talk about in the budget and, in the limited time I have available, I am going to focus on three areas. I am going to talk about what we are doing in research and development. I will talk about what we are planning to do with infrastructure and transportation, because that is a critical element of the budget for all of us, especially in my city of Toronto. Finally, I would like to talk about the need and the plan to return to a balanced budget.

First of all, when it comes to research and innovation, I do not need to convince members that research and innovation are key to building a 21st-century economy. It is a way to develop differentiated products and services, it drives productivity, and it drives a long-term, sustainable competitive advantage. That is how we are going to compete on the world stage as a country.

We want Canada to be a country where the best and brightest from around the world come to innovate and showcase their talent. Here, they can enjoy the benefits of their hard work, dedication, and creativity. When we support innovation, our businesses continue to fuel job creation and economic growth in Canada.

Economic action plan 2014 introduces many new measures to support risk-taking, entrepreneurship, and innovation. The first one I will mention is the Canada first research excellence fund, with \$1.5 billion over the next 10 years. This is a really important measure. It builds Canadian leadership in science and innovation, and it works through our world-class post-secondary institutions.

Another important pillar of our research and innovation agenda is the continued support to advance scientific research granting councils. There is \$46 million in new annual funding for organizations like the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Another very important item in this budget is the announcement of \$222 million in funding for the TRIUMF physics laboratory, which supports leading research and launches cutting edge spin-off companies. I should also mention the support for the Institute for Quantum Computing, which has some really leading-edge research being done in the field of quantum technologies. There would be \$15 million allocated for that.

*The Budget*

Another initiative that I am very close to, through my work with the government operations and estimates committee, is the creation of the Open Data Institute, which has all kinds of opportunities for using government data to create businesses and start-ups and to provide good services to Canadians.

There is ongoing and continued funding of \$500 million over two years for the automotive innovation fund, which is really critical for re-platforming and for leading Canadian and Ontario-based automotive industries into the 21st century. Something else that would also be very important all across the country is \$90 million in the forestry industry transformation program to advance new technologies in Canada's wood products and the pulp and paper sectors.

Economic action plan 2014 plans to reduce the interprovincial trade barriers, which are really important. We can have great products and services, but we need to be able to sell these things across Canada. That same thinking applies to our plan to launch campaigns to promote high quality and high value Canadian-made products around the world, which is well aligned with our very ambitious and very successful trade agenda. All of these new markets opening up for us because of our trade agreements with Europe, around the Americas, and now into Asia, will be leveraging some of the developments we have through R and D.

These research and innovation measures are not new. We are building on some of the past successes. I should mention that since 2006, we have provided over \$2 billion for universities and colleges for construction and repairs through the knowledge infrastructure program. We have also provided \$2.3 billion to support advanced research through the federal granting councils. There was also \$800 million to support post-secondary research through the Canada Foundation for Innovation. All these measures add up to a strong support for the R and D space in Canada.

I should mention one specific measure, which is \$1.5 billion to support private sector R and D in Canada's aerospace sector through the strategic aerospace and defence initiative. Last year, members of the House might recall that we launched the venture capital action plan to increase private sector investments in early-stage companies.

Canadians are innovators. We have been throughout our history, and we can compete with anybody around the world. Economic action plan 2014 gives us that shot in the arm that we need to succeed around the world.

The second item I would like to talk about is infrastructure and transportation. One of the most common conversations I have in my constituency office and with my constituents in Etobicoke—Lakeshore is the need for the city of Toronto especially, as well as other cities in Canada, to build more infrastructure, to get people moving, to get goods moving, and to help build the foundation for a strong economy.

• (1645)

In 2007, we launched the \$33 billion building Canada plan, which supported over 12,000 infrastructure projects across Canada. In 2008 and 2009, in the stimulus phase of Canada's economic action plan, we supported an additional 30,000 infrastructure projects across Canada. In 2013, we announced a new building Canada plan, even bigger and longer, a \$53 billion investment in predictable

infrastructure funding over 10 years, which is the largest and longest federal investment in job-creating infrastructure in Canadian history.

Since 2006, I should add, when I talk about the greater Toronto area, we have invested \$4.5 billion in GTA infrastructure in major projects such as the Toronto-York Spadina subway extension. We have enhanced GO Transit and invested in the revitalization of Union Station. Now we are going to support Toronto with its plans to bring much-needed mass transit to Scarborough.

The economic action plan maintains these promises in the new building Canada plan and delivers new measures that benefit Canadians from coast to coast to coast, including \$40 million to accelerate the repair and maintenance of small craft harbours and a \$200 million fund to establish a national disaster mitigation program.

I would be remiss if I did not mention how we provided increased and ongoing support through the gas tax fund, first doubling its size to \$2 billion per year and making it permanent, and then indexing it at 2% per year beginning this year.

With regard to housing, which was mentioned by some members in the chamber, we have invested over \$1 billion since 2006 for renovations and energy retrofits for close to 200,000 affordable housing units, \$600 million in the homelessness partnering strategy, and over \$1.25 billion in the investment in affordable housing program to help Canadians in need find and keep affordable housing.

These long-term investments in our roads, subways, railways, bridges, harbours, and other critical infrastructure are key to keeping Canadians moving and maintaining our quality of life and our prosperity. We benefit from these investments because they reduce commuting times so families can spend more time together.

Let me talk about why these things are important in the context of returning to balanced budgets.

Prior to the global recession, our Conservative government paid down \$37 billion in debt, bringing Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio to its lowest level in nearly 30 years. This placed Canada in a strong fiscal position to weather the global recession. When the recession hit, we made a deliberate decision to run temporary deficits by generating economic stimulus through our infrastructure program.

*The Budget*

We also decided to leave money in taxpayers' pockets. We lowered taxes, despite opposition howls to maintain them and even raise them. This gave Canadians more money to spend and kept the economy going. Conservatives know we cannot tax our way out of a recession. We have cut taxes over 150 times, reducing the overall tax burden to its lowest level in 50 years. We have cut federal taxes in every way governments collect them. We have cut personal taxes, consumption taxes, business taxes, excise taxes, duties, and many more. Our record of strong tax relief saves a typical family of four in Canada \$3,400 a year. It is unbelievable.

In addition to lowering taxes for Canadian families, we have lowered taxes for seniors and low-income Canadians. By increasing the amount Canadians can earn without paying taxes, by increasing the age credit and the pension income credit, we have removed over one million low-income Canadians from the tax rolls altogether.

Part of our plan to balance the budget is to control federal government costs, including public sector compensation and departmental expense. We need to ensure compensation and benefits are fair and in line with those of other public and private sector employees.

I should mention that unlike the previous Liberal government, our deficit reduction plan does not include cutting transfers to the provinces.

There are many benefits of a strong fiscal position. I do not need to convince you, Mr. Speaker, as I know you understand the importance of having lower borrowing costs. We are the only G7 country to have a AAA credit rating from Moody's, Fitch, and Standard & Poor's. All the measures in economic action plan 2014 lead to a higher standard of living, and we avoid burdening our children and grandchildren with our debts.

The future is bright for Canada, and I strongly suggest that all members of the House support this budget.

• (1650)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his comments. He certainly gave a great resumé of the Conservative government's perception of how things are going. However, it is interesting that with all the tax cuts he mentioned, he left out one of the dilemmas the government has, which is the astronomical household debt.

We put forward some very practical solutions to help everyday Canadians. In fact, some of them were adopted in the Speech from the Throne, but they somehow disappeared by the time they got to the budget. I would like to know what happened there.

The other issue is that the loans for apprentices are not going to help our youth. My friend from Winnipeg Centre, who has gone through the trades, will tell us it is just more debt burden, which goes back to my original point on household debt. It is not going to help. We need to do more to help people get into apprenticeships and then get into jobs.

Finally, if the Conservative government is serious about going forward, it has to be coherent. I would like to know what the member's opinion is on income splitting. Is he with his Minister of Finance on this or with his Prime Minister? Where does he stand?

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Speaker, those are three questions rolled into one. I will try and answer them as briefly as I can so that other members will have the opportunity to ask questions also.

The member's first question had to do with household debt. If we do some analysis, we will realize that not only is Canadians' household debt increasing, but Canadians' net worth is also increasing. What is happening is that people are borrowing against their net worth.

In and of itself, household debt is not a problem. We have to get down into the layers and look at what kinds of people are borrowing, and borrowing inappropriately. That is why we have put in some measures with respect to credit cards. We have also put in other measures with respect to borrowing.

Ultimately, this is a vote of confidence. People, especially young people who buy homes and have a mortgage as part of their debt, are borrowing because they have confidence in the Canadian economy and know that they can buy those homes and meet those mortgage payments. I think my friend in the opposition is building a solution for a problem that does not quite exist in the way he thinks.

The second question, if I recall, has to do with training. I know we need to leave some time for other members, but I will just say that our job plan, the Canada job grant, is really important. There are a lot of jobs out there, thousands of them, that are unfilled. This is where the job grant comes in. I have had many discussions with our minister of human resources, and we are committed to getting people into those jobs that they need.

• (1655)

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from the Conservative Party mentioned the venture capital action plan, which was announced in last year's budget. I was looking at the description of the funds that the Conservatives would be investing in. I read the words "invest primarily in Canada-focused...funds". That is not investing exclusively in getting Canadian discoveries commercialized.

I wonder if the member is concerned about that, and if he might be able to quantify the government's thinking in terms of what qualifies as sufficient Canadian content for these venture capital funds that we are investing taxpayers' money in.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Speaker, it is the 21st century. Capital, ideas, and intellectual property do travel around the world, so to try to narrow it down to the number of investors, number of ideas and who participated on teams that create these ideas is really beside the point. There are Canadian-based institutions that do this research and development, and they are the ones we are trying to promote.

*The Budget*

I thank the member for his comments about commercialization, because that is an important piece. We have made a lot of investments in commercialization to make sure that these kinds of ideas actually have real markets. That is the next hurdle that many of these companies need to go through: making sure that these products fit needs in markets out there around the world.

While I am on my feet, I will make one comment about income splitting, because my friend brought it up. It just goes to show how little there is for opposition members to criticize in this budget when they do not want to talk about this budget but the 2015 budget. I will give my friend some time in 2015. In the meantime, I am very proud of this budget.

Also, I should mention the income splitting measures that we put in for seniors. They have helped a lot of people who grew up in a generation when the single-income family was the norm.

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to talk about our new economic action plan 2014, “The Road to Balance: Creating Jobs and Opportunities”. I have been thumbing through it, and I am excited about all the good things in this budget and that we are on our way to a balanced budget. I am excited that we will be able to start paying down debt and making more investments into our economy and for Canadian families. There are so many great things in here. I am going to briefly go through a few of them, and then I am going to talk about the things that are important to my riding of Selkirk—Interlake.

We will launch the Canada job grant effective April 1, 2014. We will partner with most provinces and move ahead in matching jobs with people who need jobs. We will have the investment and partnership from the business community. The job-matching service is something we would do to help match jobs with Canadians who are looking for work.

We are going to create the Canada apprenticeship loan and run it the same way that we run the Canada student loans program. It would finally allow youth who want to participate in the red seal trades with an opportunity to get student loans while they are taking their apprenticeships. We would increase the number of unpaid internships for young Canadians, with \$55 million.

We would cut more red tape for small business. I know of small businesses up and down the main streets in my communities and the owners have to do so much paperwork. The more we can do to reduce that load, the better. We have been working at this for the last several years, and the more we can do, the better off our businesses are going to be.

We are going to continue to have more research in technology and innovation and development, with \$1.5 billion over the next decade to allow our universities and colleges to establish the Canada first research excellence fund. These are great things.

There were some things that I was hoping to see in this budget that I am very pleased to see are here. They are important to Manitoba and to Selkirk—Interlake.

One of the things we announced was a \$200-million natural disasters mitigation program. This would help communities prepare for natural disasters. Selkirk—Interlake has had a number of

overland floods because of either ice jams on the Red River, or flooding over Lake Manitoba because of the diversion along the Assiniboine River and Lake Winnipeg. Whenever we have had weather bombs come through and raise the lake levels, or there is excessive moisture because of heavy snow melts as well as wet springs, we have had a lot of damage.

Where we have been able to put in flood mitigations like the Red River Floodway, “Duff’s Ditch”, as we call it in Manitoba, they have saved billions and billions of dollars from flooding in the city of Winnipeg. If we can continue to make those types of investments in dikes and diversions and floodways, it would provide more opportunities to protect more communities, more property, and more Manitobans.

However, it is not just in Manitoba; this is available across the country. I know that in Quebec we have had flooding. We have seen some disasters this past spring in Calgary and High River, and other places in southern Alberta. This is the type of investment from our federal government that would ensure we could mitigate those types of disasters and provide the infrastructure that would have ongoing benefits to communities. It would not cost the treasury billions of dollars time and again with the devastation like we saw in Calgary this year.

I am excited to see the new horizons program get another \$5 million in addition to what it already gets. I know that the new horizons centres in my riding, as well as other seniors centres, have benefited from this program. Whether it is from accessibility grants, mentoring programs, or investing in their facility, it provides a place for seniors to gather, share, and have fun, and to pass on their knowledge to the next generation. I know they appreciate it whenever they get money to keep improving their facilities.

In 2005, one of the bills I introduced when I was in opposition was called Jonathan’s Bill. That became law a couple of years ago, through the hard work of my friend and colleague from Leeds—Grenville. We were able to establish a program that provides EI sick benefits to parents and families who are caring for terminally ill or critically ill or injured children. I am happy to report that program will be enhanced by \$2.4 million over the next two years. It would continue after that with funding of \$1.2 million in excess of the EI benefit there now, to allow families to stay at home and care for their children. There is nothing worse for children than to have to depend on the care of someone who is not their mother, father, or grandparent, and to be sitting with strangers, maybe in a hospital.

● (1700)

It is better for their recovery and for their well-being if they can have time to sit at home and be cared for by a family member. Especially if they are undergoing treatment or surgery, it is going to be important that children are with loved ones and that their families get the support they need to help them recover.



*The Budget*

In my riding, I often hear how difficult it is to be wired in on the Internet. In rural Manitoba, as in lots of places across rural Canada, Internet access is difficult. It is either dial-up or really poor wireless service. The \$305-million broadband program that was announced would speed, extend, and enhance the broadband high-speed Internet network across Canada to over 280,000 Canadian households. That would be a welcome addition for so many homeowners and businesses throughout Selkirk—Interlake.

We would invest another \$40 million to improve small craft harbours. I know that many people do not realize that in Manitoba we have an inland sea. In the riding of Selkirk—Interlake, we have over 1,000 commercial fishers. Those commercial fishers on Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba depend on having safe harbours. It is important that they have the ability to access funding to improve those harbours to keep them safe and to deal with some of the weather damage they have experienced over the last few years. I can assure everyone that they are thankful.

As a farmer in an area that represents a large farming and ranching area, I am glad to see one thing I have been asking to have for some time, which is an extension of the tax deferral program for livestock producers when they undergo drought or overland flooding. Right now cattle, goats, sheep, bison, and hogs are the only livestock that qualify for tax deferral. If farmers are in a situation where they have no feed, no pasture, and no opportunity to grow a crop to feed those animals because of flooding or drought, one option many farmers and ranchers entertain is to actually sell the livestock and re-buy stock when weather conditions improve. We have always offered farmers a tax deferral of up to 12 months if they have had to liquidate their herds. Rather than having to pay it off as income tax, they have that cash on hand so they can purchase replacement livestock.

I am glad to report that in the budget we would extend that program to include bees and horses, because in our area, we have a lot of PMU operations and horse breeders. Those are commercial farm operations.

When we talk about bees, we are not just talking about honeybees. We are also talking about leafcutter bees, which pollinate a lot of our crops, especially clover, alfalfa, and some of the other legumes that are so important to the overall production of western Canadian crops.

One thing my friend from Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette has been working on is having the recreational fisheries conservation partnership program. We ran it for the last two years as a pilot. It went over so well that it would be extended another two years and would be increased to \$15 million. I see my friend from Wetaskiwin is here, who has also been a very big player in having this program. It enhances not only the commercial fishery but the recreational fishery for the sports fishers who go out there and angle and go after trophy walleye and catfish in the Red River in Manitoba and northern pike, which we call jackfish.

There are so many opportunities for working in partnership with local fish and wildlife organizations in our small communities to develop better fisheries, to enhance the habitat, and to protect and conserve those important natural areas. I am very excited to see that.

One thing that has been very positive, as well, in my area is the trails program, whether it is for snowmobiles or hiking. This \$10

million for the National Trails Coalition would improve accessibility for people who love the outdoors and want to get out and see our natural spaces. It is one area that has great benefit for the riding of Selkirk—Interlake, not only for the snowmobilers and off-roaders but for people who like to go out on bikes or to hike and just enjoy the beautiful area of Selkirk—Interlake.

With that I am more than happy to take some questions from my colleagues. I encourage everyone in the House to support this great budget and get back to having a balanced budget and paying down our national debt again.

● (1705)

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to listen to the member, one would think that the Conservatives are friends of fishermen and wildlife. However, this is a government that just removed a subsidy to the ACR line, and a lot of the lodges up there are extremely concerned about whether they are actually going to have a season this year. Even the people who usually go there are up in arms about whether they are going to have a vacation this year. A loss of jobs would actually occur.

If the government is so serious about tourism, fishermen, and jobs, why is it cutting a \$2.2 million subsidy to CN, which will see passenger rail discontinued on the ACR line? Why is the government pushing for further losses of jobs?

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, just last week I was at a gathering of hunters and fishers at the Brokenhead River Game and Fish Association's annual meeting and banquet. The reception I received there was overwhelming. People are so happy that we got rid of the wasteful long gun registry. They are able to go out there and enjoy the outdoors and hunt and not feel like they are being watched by Big Brother every step they take. Their property is being respected.

They really appreciate the money being put into recreational fishing. They stand with us, knowing that this is the only party, on this side of the House, that is promoting their way of life and is making sure that they get to enjoy the great outdoors without being regulated out of business by the opposition or the previous Liberal government.

● (1710)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there has been a great emphasis on the impact of consecutive budgets of the government on the middle class in Canada.

One of our biggest concerns is accumulating consumer debt. Consumers in Canada have record amounts of consumer debt, debt that we should all be concerned about.

*The Budget*

How does the budget the government is proposing help directly deal with what is one of the biggest issues for Canadians today, namely record high consumer debt? That is over and above mortgage debt. We are just talking about average consumer debt of almost \$30,000.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, I can tell my friend from Winnipeg North that I actually took out my first farm mortgage back in 1984, at the tender age of 19. It was under a Liberal government.

Do members remember what interest rates were back in the early 1980s because of the way the Liberals managed the economy and managed consumer debt? Interest rates were up to the 20% level. I paid over 21% on that first mortgage for the first five years, and it was almost impossible to make those payments.

Canadians may have been spending a little more actively during the economic recovery because we have been able to keep interest rates so low. That is good for our businesses. That is, overall, good for the economy. It has been good for how the country has moved forward.

The IMF, the World Bank, and all the major credit rating agencies continue to rate this country as one of the safest places to invest. Just recently we were again called one of the top countries in the world to do business.

We like to brag about how great it is to live in this country, not just because of its economy but because of the high standard of living we enjoy under this Conservative government.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. member relates to what he talked about in terms of the action that will allow farmers to extend a tax deferral due to the forced sale of livestock.

I thought the language used here was unusual. This had to do with having to dispose of breeding stock "...due to drought or excess moisture conditions". It is on page 149. By that I think it means floods.

This budget, throughout, has many measures dealing with increased levels of natural disasters. There is a whole section on residential floods and having to deal with the insurance industry to try to get better protection.

There is an acknowledgement through this document, including at page 149 on help for farmers who have increased droughts and increased floods. Yet the document, despite spending money addressing the costs hitting Canadians and hitting our economy due to climate change, refuses to acknowledge that the climate crisis must be addressed.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary has any comments on that.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, definitely things are difficult, as always in western agriculture. My grandparents lived through the dirty thirties, trying to farm. We adapt and we change.

Talking about excess moisture, sometimes excess moisture is not just overland flooding. Sometimes it is just heavy rainfalls at the wrong time, and crops do not mature properly. In the case of bees, they cannot get to the flowers and pollinate because of all the moisture, or the alfalfa field will just not even go into bloom.

Excess moisture covers flooding, yes. It also covers excess rainfall, and other conditions will occur from time to time, which seems to be more of a norm.

Growing up, we always dealt with extremes. As a former farmer-rancher still living on the farm today, I can tell the House that we have to deal with the climate. As farmers, we understand and appreciate that, and we really appreciate it when the government steps forward and helps us to deal with those difficulties.

● (1715)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the subamendment now before the House.

[*English*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, February 12, 2014, the division stands deferred until Monday, February 24, 2014, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

I believe the hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that you seek unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Does the parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** 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

[Translation]

### PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

The House resumed from November 22, 2013, consideration of Bill C-461, An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act (disclosure of information), as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP will support the amendments to Bill C-461, but if they were not made, we would vote against the bill.

What can be said about this bill, which is typical of his government? What the government is doing is in fact exactly the opposite of what one might expect from the bill's title. It was supposed to address government transparency, but that is not what we got.

The bill was to require all direct or indirect employees of the government to disclose their salary if it was over \$188,600. In order not to have to reveal what it was paying its special advisors, its numerous consultants and the employees in the Prime Minister's Office, the government increased this amount to \$444,661. This is completely crazy.

The bill, which was introduced by a member who was a Conservative at the time, was essentially about transparency. Taxpayers are entitled to know how much people are being paid out of their tax dollars, particularly if their salary is more than \$188,600.

You can be for or against this measure. However, in order to hide its use of the machinery of government for personal purposes, the government increased the amount to \$444,661. Incredible. It is certainly indicative of this government's attitude.

The bill also imposed a number of restrictions on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, on the grounds that the CBC was not only an enemy of the Canadian people, but also a nasty crown corporation. Obviously the government feels that *Sun News* is much better and more intelligent. It is at least more conservative.

This use of government regulations for strictly personal and partisan purposes is nothing new. We have seen this in many other statutes. Private enterprise is deregulated and allowed to do whatever it wants. On the other hand, for members of first nations, the financial regulations are torture. They are far too stringent. The first nations are going to spend more time filling out government forms that working so that people in their community can have acceptable living conditions. That suits the government just fine. In the meantime, they will not be asking the government to build social housing. That is typical of this government.

It is the same story for unions. The government has spared no effort where unions are concerned. Everything has to be public, including private contracts. For example, Xerox has agreements with some unions. If a particular union asks Xerox to offer its services at a specified price, Xerox does not want another union asking it to lower its prices as well.

### Private Members' Business

Once again, the government wants to cut spending with this anti-union legislation. The private sector can establish any company in any way. For a worker who wants to unionize, it is becoming difficult. Moreover, it is easy for the management to challenge the union certification of that worker.

Let us also not forget environmental groups, because all environmentalists are being targeted by this government.

• (1720)

Indeed, these groups are dangerous. They question the fact that the government is unable to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Needless to say, that is not working.

Yesterday, we saw a surprising bill that can be legally challenged and is highly questionable from a moral point of view. It concerns officers of Parliament, who must now disclose their political past for the last 10 years. As far as I know, though, people in this country are still entitled to their own political opinion. They have the right to vote for whoever they want. This government does not seem to agree. Let us get back to this issue.

To say that this shows that the government has been in office for too long and the Prime Minister's Office—which is already struggling with many ethical issues—is not really interested in transparency is stating the obvious. This bill is not about transparency; it is about control. What the government wants is to allow private companies to acquire a non-competitive power against crown corporations such as the CBC.

We will talk about this later on, but that is the real goal. With its partisan approach, this government sees the CBC as an opponent. Of course, it is using this bill to do the opposite of what it was supposed to do originally, which was to disclose the salaries of all those who earn more than a member of Parliament. It is clear that the Prime Minister's Office does not want this information to be disclosed, although we know the Conservatives can be more cunning than that.

Instead of paying some expenses through the Prime Minister's Office or out of the Conservative Party fund, they appoint party fundraisers to the Senate to save money and make taxpayers pay. It does not cost the Conservative Party a lot of money, they get salaried workers who run fundraising campaigns on a full-time basis for them, and they are happy about that. However, Canadian taxpayers who see this are not pleased. When we see the blunders made by some Conservatives who really embarrassed the government with the magnitude of their excesses, it is easy to see that the government had other things to deal with.

Even organizers from the private sector told the committee this did not make any sense. Conservative members of the committee did not even bother to give a single reason for these changes. This speaks volumes about this government's inability to truly defend transparency.

*Private Members' Business*

As with everything else, the facts are hard to challenge. On the issue of the environment, the government may claim that acid rain does not exist, or that there is no greenhouse effect, but the facts show otherwise and people notice them. As for science, the government may claim it supports science, but when all the scientists say they are tired of being monitored and not being allowed to disclose their findings, again the facts are hard to challenge. In the case of the census, everyone told the government not to go ahead with its plan, but it did nevertheless. Now, Canada's censuses can no longer be used to anticipate medical services that should be developed in the future. For the Conservatives, climate change does not exist. People in Texas who are coping with a snow storm must really be having a good laugh. As for the CBC, the Conservatives are essentially saying that the corporation is not a problem.

There is nothing worse for a liar than the facts and the truth. We are going to support the amendments and this point of view on transparency. We are going to say yes to these amendments.

• (1725)

If the amendments are not adopted by the House, we will have no choice but to oppose this legislation, which is inappropriate, which is against Canada, and which does not promote transparency.

[English]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak on the subject of Bill C-461, an act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act (disclosure of information). The bill was introduced in the House on November 5, 2012, by the member for Edmonton—St. Albert, and it has been the subject of numerous debates.

The bill was referred to the House from committee for third reading debate. Shortly before the debate took place, the member for Edmonton—St. Albert tabled eight motions to amend the bill as adopted in committee and as reported to the House on June 6, 2013. Today I wish to speak to these motions.

It is important to recognize that these motions fundamentally alter the state of Bill C-461. They would remove everything related to the records of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. These motions not only fundamentally alter the state of Bill C-461 as amended by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics but also go against what the member for Edmonton—St. Albert originally proposed for Bill C-461.

The bill initially proposed to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act to make most of the CBC's information accessible under these acts. This was an important component of Bill C-461.

At that time, the bill proposed to change the treatment of the CBC's records to be in line with the recommendations made by the ethics committee during its study of section 68.1 of the Access to Information Act. Section 68.1 is the ambiguous and confusing exclusion currently applicable to the CBC. This is the provision that the Federal Court of Appeal described as “a recipe for controversy” in paragraph 69 of its decision in 2011 FCA 326, the case of the CBC v. the Information Commissioner of Canada.

The government will oppose all eight motions presented by the independent member for Edmonton—St. Albert and will ask that Bill C-461 be voted on in the state in which it was when it was referred to the House on June 6, 2013.

I will now speak on each motion separately.

Motion No. 1 would modify the long title of Bill C-461 to remove the reference to the Access to Information Act. Based on this motion, the title would now read “An act to amend the Privacy Act (disclosure of information)”. The motion goes against what the member from Edmonton—St. Albert originally proposed for Bill C-461 and against what was approved in committee. The approved version proposed to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act to make most information under the CBC's control accessible under both of these acts.

Motion No. 2 would modify clause 1 of the bill—that is, the short title of Bill C-461—by removing the reference to the CBC. With this motion, the short title of the bill would read “This Act may be cited as the Public Service Disclosure and Transparency Act”. Again, this motion goes against what the member for Edmonton—St. Albert originally proposed for Bill C-461 and what was approved in committee. Bill C-461 was originally about increasing transparency of the CBC by removing the broad exclusion that applied to it.

The government will oppose both of these motions, as they fundamentally modify Bill C-461.

Motion No. 3 proposes to delete clause 2 of Bill C-461 and thus remove the proposed injury-based exemption, which would relate to how records of the CBC are to be treated under the Access to Information Act. I will remind the House that the bill originally introduced by the member for Edmonton—St. Albert proposed this injury-based exemption.

As a result of this, repealing the current ambiguous exclusion available to the CBC—that is, section 68.1 of the Access to Information Act—would no longer be viable. That is reflected by Motion No. 4, which would delete the relevant section of Bill C-461. The effect of these two motions would be the continuation of the status quo for the CBC.

• (1730)

The effect of these two motions would be the continuation of the status quo for the CBC. The Access to Information Act would not apply to information under the control of the CBC that relates to its journalistic, creative, or programming activities, other than information that relates to its general administration. This ambiguous exclusion would remain and the public would be prevented from getting access to much of CBC's information.

As I have indicated, the government will oppose these motions.

Motion No. 5 would amend clause 4 of Bill C-461 by modifying the categories of personal information that could be disclosed by government institutions respecting their employees or officers, and the threshold for doing this. The new proposed threshold would be based on the sessional allowance payable to a member of Parliament.

*Private Members' Business*

Members have already debated what information should be disclosed under the Privacy Act. The bill was amended to reflect what the government considers necessary to promote more transparency at a certain level of the public administration.

The government will oppose this motion, as it alters Bill C-461.

Motion No. 6, would delete clause 5 of Bill C-461 and would therefore remove the proposed injury-based exemption, which would relate to how records of the CBC are to be treated under the Privacy Act. Here again, I will remind the House that the bill originally introduced by the member for Edmonton—St. Albert proposed this injury-based exemption.

The government will oppose this motion, as it modifies the essence of Bill C-461.

Motion No. 7 would delete clause 6 of the bill, which provides for an exclusion for personal information under control of the CBC that would reveal the identity of any confidential journalistic sources, and for personal information that the CBC collects, uses, or discloses solely for journalistic, artistic, or literary purposes.

The government amended the bill in committee to add an exclusion for any information under the control of the CBC that would reveal the identity of any confidential journalistic sources. The government strongly believes that the confidentiality of journalistic sources is a fundamental aspect of journalism, and we do not want to place the CBC at a disadvantage compared to private sector broadcasters.

The government will therefore oppose this motion, as it alters Bill C-461.

The effect of Motion No. 8 is that the status quo would remain for the CBC with respect to access to its personal information. The Privacy Act would continue to not apply to personal information that the CBC collects, uses, or discloses solely for journalistic, artistic, or literary purposes.

The government will oppose this motion as it modifies Bill C-461 in a fundamental way.

I am grateful for this opportunity to speak on these motions amending Bill C-461. As noted at the beginning, our government will oppose all eight motions presented by the member for Edmonton—St. Albert, and we ask that Bill C-461 be voted on in the state that it was referred to this House on June 6, 2013.

• (1735)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will not take a long time in this debate. Suffice it to say that during the last round of debates, before the bill hit committee, I was one of those members who voted against it. However, the amendments brought forward by my friend go a long way toward establishing the intent of the bill with respect to transparency.

I find it ironic that the government that touts itself as being a champion of accountability does not want to expose salaries above the \$160,000 mark. It moved it to \$444,000. Imagine: if someone makes anything more than \$160,000 up to almost a half a million dollars, the government does not want the public to know about it.

The public should know. This is the government of accountability, or so it claims to be, which is why I am astonished that it would not allow this to go through. We just heard all about this. How can it be a Conservative government of accountability when anyone who makes below \$444,000 including bonuses it does not want? It is incredible.

The Conservatives want everything out there. They want to protect taxpayer money, yet they do not want taxpayers to see how they spend their money within their own offices, such as the PMO and others, including bonuses.

That is the part that really gets to me. It is not so much about the CBC as it is about that. That is what this is all about. I am astonished that a government that claims accountability would go to this measure. It goes against the grain of Conservative principles, such that we have an honest member of Parliament here who became an independent as a result of it.

• (1740)

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my constituents in Surrey North to speak to Bill C-461, the CBC and public service disclosure and transparency act. Bill C-461 is a blatant attack on the CBC's ability to remain competitive and independent, which the Conservative government has tried to cloak with language of "transparency". The Canadian public will not be served by the changes proposed by this bill. The only beneficiaries will be CBC's competitors.

How can the federal government, while demonstrating a trend toward greater secrecy and less transparency, ask for exactly the opposite from everyone else? In a stunning display of hypocrisy, the Conservatives continue to demand near limitless disclosure from first nations, labour unions, and now the CBC, while they simultaneously refuse to disclose the number of employees in the PMO who earn over \$100,000.

If the Conservative government were truly interested in transparency, it would have supported the original salary disclosure measures in this bill. Instead, during the ethics committee's study of the bill, the Conservatives gutted these provisions by raising the minimum income threshold for full salary disclosure of federal employees from \$188,600 to \$444,661 annually. This amendment they introduced at committee was designed to effectively neutralize Bill C-461's salary disclosure measures, and rather than supporting transparency, as the name of this bill suggests, the Conservatives are doing exactly the opposite. By gutting the salary disclosure provisions proposed in this bill, the Conservatives are yet again demonstrating their aversion to any measure of true transparency.

*Private Members' Business*

I am sure Canadians are wondering why the Conservatives voted to raise the salary disclosure threshold. There must certainly be a valid rationale behind this particular decision. I am sorry to disappoint Canadians searching for this answer. There should be a reasonable explanation from the government, but there does not seem to be one. In fact, the federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation noted that not a single witness nor committee member even spoke to why increasing the threshold was a good idea. I have to say that I agree with the director's prediction that this was probably because the Conservatives could not think of even one good reason to justify their action.

The Conservatives are demonstrating that they are nothing if not consistent in this position. Over the past few months, we have seen in the House their attempts at evasion and cloaking the truth. Even independent transparency experts have criticized the government for its deteriorating commitment to transparency. How can we be expected to work toward transparency when the government is unable to set a good example of what that should look like? Why should we settle for transparency for everyone except the Conservatives? On this side of the House, we believe in a regime of transparency and accountability that applies fairly to all aspects of the federal government. This is clearly not a view shared by my colleagues across the aisle.

I am sure we can all agree that it is of the utmost importance that the CBC remains accountable to Canadians. However, it is also important that CBC be able to protect its journalistic programming and creative activities in order to perform and deliver in this marketplace. This bill would make protection of that information significantly difficult and would threaten CBC's competitiveness and ability to produce investigative journalism.

It is important to acknowledge, first of all, that the CBC has taken measures to improve its access to information operations dramatically. In fact, the information commissioner remarked in her 2011-12 report cards that CBC had "achieved an outstanding level of compliance" and awarded the CBC an A grade for its performance under the Access to Information Act.

• (1745)

Furthermore, the CBC proactively discloses information to the public beyond what is required. The CBC's improvement in this area is even more impressive when compared to the federal government's own appalling performance in this regard.

The amendments in this bill would repeal the exclusion from the Access to Information Act of CBC's information that is related to journalistic, creative, and programming activities, and instead replace it with an exemption. Under this exemption, the CBC would be required to demonstrate that the disclosure of a record would be reasonably expected to prejudice the corporation's journalistic, creative, and programming independence.

Currently the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada reviews the requested documents to ensure that the information relates to protected activities, and then makes a decision. Under the proposed exemption, the CBC would be required to turn over documents, as well as legal arguments, outlining how the release of the information would cause injury to the CBC.

This would place an undue and unfair burden on the CBC and would open a door to damaging requests, as well as needless and expensive legal battles. There is no other broadcaster that is subject to similar measures.

It is clear that these amendments would seriously threaten the CBC's journalistic operations. The majority of the CBC's access to information requests already come from its competitors. These amendments would only serve to exaggerate the situation and force the CBC to spend more time and effort protecting information relating to journalistic, creative, and programming activities from its direct competitors.

Why would we want to expose our public broadcaster to this extra burden, which would seriously threaten its competitiveness? These amendments are unnecessary. The CBC has already demonstrated excellent compliance with the Access to Information Act, and the Federal Court of Appeal has already settled the matter to the satisfaction of both the Information Commissioner of Canada and the CBC. There is absolutely no need to place an additional burden on CBC, our public broadcaster.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I must point out the hypocrisy of this bill. How is that the Conservatives can expect the CBC to adhere to an even more demanding access to information procedure when they are not performing to the level that CBC is? This is truly perplexing to me.

This bill is a backdoor attack on the CBC, targeting its ability to remain competitive and independent. The Conservatives have demonstrated, with their amendments to the bill, that they are not committed to ensuring transparency on salary disclosure.

I agree that the CBC must remain accountable to Canadians, but this bill would hinder its ability to protect journalistic, programming, and creative activities, which would negatively impact its ability to perform and deliver in the marketplace. I believe that the CBC should remain a strong and independent public broadcaster. The bill demonstrates that the Conservatives clearly do not feel the same way.

• (1750)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The question is on Motion No. 1.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred and the recorded division will also apply to Motion Nos. 2-4 and 6-8.

The next question is on Motion No. 5.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Normally, at this time, the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill.

However, pursuant to Standing Order 98, the divisions stand deferred until Wednesday, February 26, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

---

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on January 27 I asked a question about a recent episode of red dust in Limoilou.

In fact, I went to the location in question to see the deposit, which was limited to a very specific area in the extreme southern part of Limoilou, but nevertheless affected several hundred residents.

Needless to say, the question had to do with the fact that the Port of Quebec and the company were hiding behind the federal government to avoid taking any action. For its part, the federal government stated in a letter that I received from the Minister of the Environment that as the contamination was related to air quality, it fell under provincial jurisdiction.

I have been working on this file for over a year now, and my team has worked very hard on it too. I ended up submitting many access to information requests. I wish to tell the House that I am extremely dissatisfied, because some of the answers I received, from both Transport Canada and Environment Canada, demonstrated patent inaction. This was the case for several of the replies. Others had so

many sections blacked out that I was unable to determine the outcomes of the consultations or actions by the two departments in question. It amounted to an outright denial.

The departments involved are clearly hiding behind sections of the Access to Information Act and claiming that there is too much information of various kinds for it to be disclosed. This pretext goes much too far and is much too wide-ranging for me to be able to believe it and let things go. However, what is particularly deplorable is that many of my access to information requests remained unanswered, even though the deadline for responding was exceeded by a wide margin.

I will come back to the answer that I received from the environment minister. It was repeated, practically word for word, by an employee in the minister's department: air quality is a provincial jurisdiction and hence the responsibility of the Quebec Department of the Environment in this specific case.

I would like to point out to the House that this response contradicts the claims made by the Minister of Transport, who is passing the buck to the Port of Quebec and washing her hands of the whole affair.

On the other hand, it is viewed quite differently by the Port of Quebec, and particularly Arrimage Québec, represented by Johanne Lapointe, who claimed in connection with the most recent episode that all matters pertaining to dust contamination in the Limoilou area are in fact the responsibility of the Quebec Department of the Environment, but that everything within the boundaries of the port remains to be determined by the courts. In other words, this is one more way for Arrimage Québec to shirk responsibility, with the collusion of the federal Conservative government, of course.

I would like to ask the minister when she will finally shoulder her responsibilities and resolve this impasse, which has been holding residents of my riding hostage for too long?

• (1755)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Beauport—Limoilou for his question.

First of all, I would like to remind the member of the efforts of Transport Canada in monitoring the file related to dust emissions in the Limoilou area. I believe it is important to mention that Transport Canada is working in close co-operation with the Quebec Port Authority, which is responsible for administering, managing and operating on a stand-alone basis the infrastructure under its responsibility.

Also, I would like to emphasize that the federal government is not involved in the day-to-day operations of Canadian port authorities and any consequences resulting from these operations are under the ports' jurisdiction and responsibility. However, regarding the dust emissions, the port authority implemented measures for monitoring the types and quantities of air emissions associated with port operations.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

As the member knows, the Quebec Department of Sustainable Development, Environment, Wildlife and Parks has determined in a report that the high source of contamination of nickel in the air is due to the transfer of mineral ore by Arrimage St-Laurent, an affiliate of Arrimage Québec. Since then, as a follow-up to the notice of non-compliance sent by the Quebec government, Arrimage du St-Laurent has worked on developing an environmental action plan, the latest version of which was sent to the Quebec government on October 15.

Note that Arrimage du St-Laurent already announced a full review of its operations, the installation of water and snow cannons and dust sensors, the implementations of washing stations, and the relocation of an access route. I would like to highlight that the cannons and the dust sensors are now fully operational.

The Quebec Port Authority, which works in collaboration with all of its lessees to limit the impact of the port activities on the community, follows-up and co-operates in implementing the measures put in place by Arrimage du St-Laurent. It is also worth noting that the port authority now dedicates a full-time resource whose role is to ensure the smooth operation of the transshipment of ore.

In light of the recent dust emission developments, I am confident and satisfied with the efforts made by the Quebec Port Authority to further the region's economic development while ensuring the quality of life of residents of beautiful Quebec City and the quality of the environment.

Furthermore, Arrimage du St-Laurent said that it will collaborate with the government of Quebec to address this incident.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for providing an answer and for making himself available, but I have to express my dissatisfaction right away.

When he talks about Transport Canada's efforts with respect to the Port of Quebec, what efforts is he talking about? I cannot get any answers. There is no transparency. That is abundantly clear.

I would especially like to remind him that the scope of the port authorities' responsibilities and powers is determined by Ottawa. The federal government determined the famous parameters that mean that port authorities operate in isolation and do not have to be accountable, except for one event per year that is basically little more than a media relations exercise.

Unfortunately, while the people of Limoilou are suffering the consequences of the operations at the port, we are not able to get any answers.

I am totally dissatisfied with his answer. I am going to ask him when we can finally have some openness, some transparency and some real co-operation.

• (1800)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member would like the minister to interfere, but I am not sure what part of "arms-length organization" he does not understand.

The Port of Quebec is an arms-length organization responsible for its own operational decisions and the consequences of that related to the environment. We know it is working not only with its lessees, those who are leasing and are tenants on its land, but also with the Quebec government.

We continue to monitor that file.

[*Translation*]

## RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me today to continue with a debate that is of great concern to the people in my riding: the loss of VIA Rail service.

In just a few weeks, we are likely to lose all VIA Rail service in eastern Canada, from Quebec City to Halifax and up to the Gaspé. This is a matter of real concern. The service has existed for 100 years now, but because of the government's lack of interest, there is a real danger we will lose it forever.

I would like to come back to what the minister said in this House. Today, in response to a question from my colleague from Halifax, she suggested that we could perhaps take a look at a map in order to understand the region's geography. I can guarantee her that we are very knowledgeable about the geography of the region. I would like to encourage her to study the map with the help of opposition members so that she understands the problems that will be created if the federal government does not invest in the 70 km of rail that is at risk between Miramichi and Bathurst.

If the investment is not made in the next five months, we may lose VIA Rail service forever in eastern Canada. If the federal government does not invest in the railway in the Gaspé region in the next few weeks, the railway line may be shut down forever in my region by the end of March.

The amounts required are not enormous. For the 70 km railway section in New Brunswick, we are talking about an investment of \$10 million over 15 years, in partnership with CN, which could save our railway. We could save VIA Rail service throughout eastern Canada. For the Gaspé, in partnership with the province and the region, the federal government could invest a few million dollars to save the railway and restore VIA rail service.

I would like to point out that VIA Rail service in eastern Canada involves two VIA routes that are twinned along two-thirds of the route. There is one train that divides in Matapédia, at the Quebec-New Brunswick border. The train separates and continues either to the Gaspé or to Halifax. If we lose the train to Halifax, we will lose the train to the Gaspé, because it is the same train.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

The government says over and over that there is nothing it can do. It says that CN is unfortunately a private company and that the railway is an independent Crown corporation. It says that it is too complicated for the federal government to invest in a Crown corporation. The board members for this Crown corporation are appointed by the government. The Crown corporation is a division of the government. There is good reason why VIA Rail is a Crown corporation, and it is precisely because in the past it was felt that it was a priority to ensure that people in the regions had access to an adequate transportation network. Now we have a government that believes that people no longer need this transportation network.

I would like to state that the opposite is true. The people in my region depend on VIA Rail to get to the major centres. VIA Rail seems to be saying that the people in the region will have to make other arrangements, for instance, taking the bus. I would like to point out that soon the bus service in my region will probably be eliminated. In New Brunswick, Acadian Lines suspended service for several months and people had no other public transportation or public transit to travel to other regions. VIA Rail service is essential to ensure that people in the area can continue to participate in and fully contribute to the Canadian economy. This is part of the economy. VIA Rail is part of the wealth and well-being of our beautiful country; it must be present and provide adequate services.

I would like to know what the parliamentary secretary plans on doing to help the people in my region.

•(1805)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the intervention by the New Democrat member.

Let me start by saying that our government has a strong record of investing in VIA Rail. We have made investments of \$1 billion since 2007.

I shared some of this with the member for Acadie—Bathurst. Since 2007, we have made strong capital investments for the refurbishment of some of the stock at VIA Rail. I reminded the member, of course, that he voted against all of that support. The support for the VIA Rail network last year, across the network, was \$275 million.

I have to remind the member that VIA Rail is in fact a crown corporation. It is not a branch of government. It is not a department of the government. The minister does not sit down every day and figure out where the trains go and what routes are done with what.

There is a board and there is a CEO. They make decisions, commercial decisions about how to run the business in the best way that they can. Their primary objective, of course, is that they provide safe and efficient passenger rail service. They also try to do it in the most cost-efficient manner as possible.

CN, as a private company, has entered into a discontinuance process. That process is set out in regulations, and it is following that. It is following the regulations that are in place. In the meantime, it is responsible for things like track safety.

However, I believe I heard the minister today, in question period, on this issue. She said that our government has taken no decision in this matter.

**Mr. Philip Toone:** Mr. Speaker, no decision is not sufficient. We actually need a decision. We need to know that there is going to be support. We need to know the rail is going to be there so we can ensure there is service in our region.

We need to know the government is going to be there to help the people in New Brunswick, the Gaspé, in all of eastern Canada past Quebec City. We need to know there is sufficient investment so that there will be continuous service.

Today the minister suggested that maybe there is going to be an alternate route. Well, the alternate route is through Edmundston and Plaster Rock. That route, unfortunately, is largely forested. There is very little base for passenger service in that area. There is certainly no recent history of passenger service.

I am in favour if VIA Rail wants to expand service in other areas. Please, go ahead and do so. However, let us go where it has been tried, where it is true, where there is guaranteed use of that service, and that is in northern New Brunswick and the Gaspé region.

The inadequate response from the government is that it has not taken a decision yet. The time is ticking. The national dream of Sir John A. Macdonald is going to disappear right before our eyes.

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, I reject the hyperbole of the member, if he is suggesting that somehow there is no rail service from Halifax to other parts of the country, for example.

I know his hon. colleague from Acadie—Bathurst tried to make the same assertion, that somehow we would not have rail from coast to coast. I think the Ocean line still runs from Halifax to points westward.

Having said that, as I said before, CN has taken a decision, a private business decision, as it is certainly entitled to do. It is following the regulations of a discontinuance process. It is responsible for track safety.

As I said earlier, the government has not made a decision on that.

•(1810)

## LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to pursue a question that I first asked in the House of Commons a few weeks ago, dealing with the legality of the current administration's decision to shut down libraries and dispense with materials.

The stories in the media were deeply disturbing. We heard about the Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg, for example. These were Department of Fisheries and Oceans libraries in particular that attracted a certain amount of media attention, and certainly public outrage and scientists expressing concern.

The shutting down of these libraries was explained on government websites as having to do with the digitalization of material so that we could enter a modern age and not have to rely on papers and books and documents and so on, but could instead go online and look things up. That did not excite a lot of protest.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

It was not until the actual physical dismantling of these libraries occurred that the libraries of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans were shrunk across Canada and, essentially, according to eyewitness reports, materials from collections were taken to dumpsters and people who had books out on loan were not asked to return them but just held onto them. People who were concerned with the loss of Department of Fisheries and Oceans materials showed up at, say, the Freshwater Institute and helped themselves either to salvage the materials or to benefit from the fact these were available for free.

Someone I know quite well who works with a Manitoba NGO called Manitoba Wildlands saw a private contractor, who does a lot of work for Manitoba Hydro, help himself to large volumes of material that had been put together on behalf of the people of Canada, paid for by the taxpayers of Canada, and then taken into private hands as the libraries were essentially looted before being dismantled.

Those stories prompted my interest. I had certainly been concerned. I knew that the libraries for the Canadian Forest Service had been dismantled. I knew from a retired forester at the time who was concerned that books were disappearing from a library in Victoria. People were very worried about this.

It occurred to me, as I heard of these accumulated stories of libraries being dismantled that this could not be legal. This was material put together for the people of Canada and paid for by the people of Canada.

So I did some research, and the question I asked in the House dealt with the fact that under the Library and Archives of Canada Act there is a specific set of procedures that must be followed. If the materials count as public records, which could certainly have applied to the material in DFO libraries, for instance raw data and things that are not published in multiple copies, those cannot be destroyed without the written consent of the Librarian and Archivist of Canada. Regarding documents that are called “publications”, with multiple copies, the act is very clear: even if the material is surplus to need, the Library and Archivist must take care and control of that material and dispense with it carefully.

As a matter of fact, the more I looked into it I saw that not only was the Library and Archives Act of Canada being violated in the way these materials were being dealt with, so was the Surplus Crown Assets Act.

I called the current acting Librarian and Archivist of Canada and he let me know by phone that he had not provided a single written consent to the destruction of records. So if there were any records destroyed, that was illegal. And in terms of the care and control of materials, the eyewitness reports suggest that the care and control of materials was simply ignored on the assumption that the government of the day had the power to do away with the documentary heritage of this country. That is what the act calls it, “the documentary heritage”.

I maintain it is illegal. I would like a straight answer from the government.

**Hon. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here this

evening. It has been a little while since I have been here for a late show.

I want to be very clear. What the member opposite has stated is absolutely false. It is concerning to me because, to the credit of public servants across the country, they take great care of all the documents that are made available not only to those of us in the House of Commons but also to the Canadian public.

The original materials have been and will be preserved, to answer one of the questions the member opposite had.

As for duplicate materials, some may be made available to the public; others have been disposed of in an environmentally conscious manner, as has been outlined previously in this place.

Information that was available in a library continues to be available online. This is a digital age. We are delighted that the archives and the libraries across the country have been able to digitize many materials so that we have those available to Canadians. And these are actually more accessible to Canadians.

Having grown up in northern Canada, coming to a national archive or to a library in a large central location was something that was unheard of to me. In Fort McMurray, Alberta, there are now these great things called “computers”, and I can look up anything online anywhere in the country, which is fabulous.

So I am delighted that we now have more Canadians and more individuals who have access to this information and in a responsible way, while ensuring that we are taking care of taxpayer dollars.

● (1815)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy as well to see my friend the hon. minister back at the late show. Unfortunately, I am not satisfied with the answer received yet again tonight.

Let me just, for the edification of the chamber, read section 16 of the Library and Archives of Canada Act which states:

Despite the Surplus Crown Assets Act, all publications that have become surplus to the requirements of any government institution shall—

It is not “may”, but “shall” mandatorily.

—be placed in the care or control of the Librarian and Archivist.

There is no evidence based on the eyewitness accounts of the destruction of these libraries that there was any inventory properly taken. Now many of the materials, by the way, coincidentally, have been shipped to the Institute for Ocean Sciences, which is in my riding on West Saanich Road, but they are not yet available. They are still sort of in sarcophagi.

We do not know what was destroyed. There is a mandatory duty on every government to protect the documentary heritage of Canadians. In this case it was not done.

**Hon. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the accusations are false. Original documents have and will be preserved.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a. m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

*Adjournment Proceedings*

(The House adjourned at 6:17 p.m.)

---



# CONTENTS

Thursday, February 13, 2014

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Supplementary Estimates (C), 2013-14

#### Petitions

##### Criminal Code

Mrs. Smith ..... 2965

##### Shark Finning

Mr. Donnelly ..... 2965

##### Aboriginal Affairs

Ms. Bennett ..... 2965

##### Canada Post

Mr. Thibeault ..... 2965

##### VIA Rail

Ms. St-Denis ..... 2965

##### Gatineau Park

Ms. Péclet ..... 2965

##### Multiple Sclerosis

Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North) ..... 2965

##### VIA Rail

Mr. Caron ..... 2966

##### The Environment

Ms. Foote ..... 2966

##### Mining Industry

Ms. Foote ..... 2966

##### Parks Canada

Ms. Chow ..... 2966

##### Public Transit

Ms. Chow ..... 2966

##### Aboriginal Affairs

Ms. Ashton ..... 2966

##### Ukraine

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 2966

##### Gatineau Park

Ms. Turmel ..... 2966

##### Manawan School

Ms. Raynault ..... 2966

#### Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lukiwski ..... 2967

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### The Budget

##### Financial Statement of Minister of Finance

Motion ..... 2967

Mr. Caron ..... 2967

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 2969

Mr. Menegakis ..... 2969

Mr. Côté ..... 2970

Mr. Leung ..... 2970

Mr. Donnelly ..... 2971

Ms. Sgro ..... 2971

Mr. Aspin ..... 2972

Mr. Rafferty ..... 2973

Mr. Easter ..... 2973

Mrs. Smith ..... 2973

Mr. Thibeault ..... 2973

Mr. Payne ..... 2975

Mr. Easter ..... 2975

Mr. Garrison ..... 2975

Mr. Sopuck ..... 2977

Mr. Easter ..... 2977

Mr. Payne ..... 2977

Mrs. Sellah ..... 2979

Mr. Easter ..... 2980

Mr. Menegakis ..... 2980

Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe ..... 2981

Mr. Garneau ..... 2982

Mr. Masse ..... 2982

Mr. Rousseau ..... 2983

Mrs. Ambler ..... 2984

Mr. Rousseau ..... 2984

Mrs. Ambler ..... 2985

Mr. Rankin ..... 2986

Ms. May ..... 2986

Mrs. Ambler ..... 2986

Mr. Donnelly ..... 2987

Mr. Garneau ..... 2987

Mr. Sopuck ..... 2988

Mr. Rankin ..... 2989

Mr. Easter ..... 2990

Mr. Easter ..... 2990

Mr. Payne ..... 2991

Mr. Donnelly ..... 2992

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 2992

Mr. Albas ..... 2993

Mr. Rankin ..... 2993

Mr. Leef ..... 2994

Mr. Donnelly ..... 2995

Mr. Garneau ..... 2995

Mr. Wallace ..... 2996

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

#### Winter Olympic Games

Mr. Adler ..... 2997

#### Health

Mr. Gravelle ..... 2998

#### Ukraine

Mr. Hiebert ..... 2998

#### Heart Month

Mr. Casey ..... 2998

#### Prince Albert Citizen of the Year

Mr. Hoback ..... 2998

#### Lucie Fortin

Ms. Latendresse ..... 2998

<b>1948 Winter Olympic Athlete</b>	
Mr. Holder .....	2999
<b>The Budget</b>	
Mr. Dechert .....	2999
<b>Gaétan Brassard</b>	
Mr. Larose .....	2999
<b>Winter Olympic Games</b>	
Ms. Crockatt .....	2999
<b>Michel Gouin</b>	
Mr. Choquette .....	3000
<b>Windsor</b>	
Mr. Watson .....	3000
<b>The Budget</b>	
Ms. Bennett .....	3000
<b>Firearms</b>	
Mr. Calkins .....	3000
<b>The Budget</b>	
Mr. Boulerice .....	3000
<b>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation</b>	
Mr. Bezan .....	3001

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Taxation</b>	
Ms. Leslie .....	3001
Mr. Flaherty .....	3001
Ms. Leslie .....	3001
Mr. Flaherty .....	3001
<b>Democratic Reform</b>	
Ms. Leslie .....	3001
Mr. Poilievre .....	3001
Mr. Christopherson .....	3002
Mr. Poilievre .....	3002
Mr. Christopherson .....	3002
Mr. Poilievre .....	3002
<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Trudeau .....	3002
Ms. Ambrose .....	3002
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Trudeau .....	3002
Mr. Flaherty .....	3002
<b>The Environment</b>	
Mr. Trudeau .....	3002
Mrs. Aglukkaq .....	3002
<b>Intergovernmental Affairs</b>	
Ms. Nash .....	3003
Mr. Flaherty .....	3003
<b>The Budget</b>	
Ms. Nash .....	3003
Mrs. Aglukkaq .....	3003
Mr. Caron .....	3003
Mr. Kenney .....	3003

<b>Veterans Affairs</b>	
Mr. Chicoine .....	3003
Mr. Albas .....	3003
Mr. Stoffer .....	3003
Mr. Fantino .....	3004
<b>Democratic Reform</b>	
Ms. Charlton .....	3004
Mr. Poilievre .....	3004
Ms. Charlton .....	3004
Mr. Poilievre .....	3004
Ms. Latendresse .....	3004
Mr. Poilievre .....	3004
Ms. Latendresse .....	3004
Mr. Poilievre .....	3004
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Brison .....	3005
Mr. Flaherty .....	3005
Mr. Brison .....	3005
Mr. Flaherty .....	3005
<b>National Defence</b>	
Ms. Murray .....	3005
Mr. Bezan .....	3005
<b>Rail Transportation</b>	
Ms. Chow .....	3005
Ms. Raitt .....	3005
Mr. Mai .....	3005
Ms. Raitt .....	3006
Mr. Mai .....	3006
Ms. Raitt .....	3006
Mr. Chisholm .....	3006
Ms. Raitt .....	3006
Mr. Zimmer .....	3006
Ms. Raitt .....	3006
<b>The Budget</b>	
Mr. Thibeault .....	3006
Mr. Bernier .....	3006
Ms. Papillon .....	3007
Mr. Bernier .....	3007
Mr. Dubé .....	3007
Ms. Bergen .....	3007
<b>Employment Insurance</b>	
Mr. Aubin .....	3007
Mr. Flaherty .....	3007
<b>The Budget</b>	
Mr. Dion .....	3007
Mr. Dykstra .....	3007
Mr. Bélanger .....	3007
Ms. Bergen .....	3007
<b>Rail Transportation</b>	
Mr. Martin .....	3008
Mr. Ritz .....	3008
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona) .....	3008
Mr. Ritz .....	3008

<b>Justice</b>	
Mr. Wallace.....	3008
Mr. Blaney .....	3008

<b>Citizenship and Immigration</b>	
Mr. McCallum.....	3008
Mr. Alexander.....	3009

<b>The Budget</b>	
Mr. Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord).....	3009
Mr. Bezan .....	3009
Mr. Dreeshen .....	3009
Ms. Ambrose.....	3009
Mrs. Sellah .....	3009
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam).....	3009

<b>Intergovernmental Affairs</b>	
Mr. Del Mastro.....	3009
Mr. Flaherty.....	3009

<b>Business of the House</b>	
Mr. Cullen .....	3010
Mr. Van Loan.....	3010

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

<b>The Budget</b>	
<b>Financial Statement of Minister of Finance</b>	
Motion.....	3011
Ms. Mathysen .....	3011
Mrs. Day .....	3012
Mr. Hsu.....	3013
Mrs. Truppe.....	3013
Mrs. Day .....	3013
Mr. Lamoureux.....	3014
Ms. Péclet .....	3015
Mr. Obhrai .....	3015
Mr. Dewar.....	3016
Mr. Hsu.....	3017
Ms. May.....	3017
Mrs. McLeod.....	3017

Mr. Jacob.....	3018
Mr. Hsu.....	3019
Mr. Blanchette.....	3019
Mr. Jacob.....	3020
Mr. Lamoureux.....	3021
Ms. Perreault .....	3021
Mr. Lamoureux.....	3022
Ms. Boivin .....	3023
Mr. Trottier.....	3023
Mr. Dewar.....	3025
Mr. Hsu.....	3025
Mr. Bezan .....	3026
Mrs. Hughes.....	3027
Mr. Lamoureux.....	3027
Ms. May.....	3028
Division on motion deferred.....	3028

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

<b>Public Service of Canada</b>	
Bill C-461. Report stage.....	3029
Mr. Giguère.....	3029
Mr. Menegakis .....	3030
Mr. Simms.....	3031
Mr. Sandhu .....	3031
Division on Motion Nos. 1, 2-4, and 6-8 deferred .....	3033
Division on Motion No. 5 deferred.....	3033

### ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Côté.....	3033
Mr. Watson .....	3033
<b>Rail Transportation</b>	
Mr. Toone .....	3034
Mr. Watson .....	3035
<b>Library and Archives Canada</b>	
Ms. May.....	3035
Ms. Leitch.....	3036

Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>