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Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 12, 2014

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

PROMOTION OF LOCAL FOODS ACT

The House resumed from March 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-539, An Act to promote local foods, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to talk about what I think is an important concept and idea. At the end of the day, Canadians would respond very positively to the concept of a pro-Canadian food strategy. I think it has a lot of appeal and is something we should be moving more towards.

There is a role for the Government of Canada to play, even at some of the very basic levels. I always find it interesting how much money the Government of Canada will spend on advertising. We spend literally tens of millions of tax dollars on useless advertising. A good example, which I have used before, is the economic action plan that the government tends to promote at a phenomenal cost in tax dollars. I would suggest it is an absolute waste. We could use some of those tax dollars in a more productive fashion, and this is a good example of where I believe the government could be spending smarter in terms of those advertising dollars.

Specifically, when we talk about developing a pro-Canadian food strategy, part of that no doubt has to incorporate advertising with respect to some basic information that would be wonderful to know. For example, how many Canadians know what types of vegetables are actually grown here in Canada? When is the season for strawberries? To what degree do we participate in promotion and educating our population about our agricultural communities, our farmers, and the incredible work they do in terms of providing food for our tables?

Once all is said and done, I believe the government will be found lacking and wanting in terms of being able to educate people and provide a higher sense of public awareness. The Conservatives have

really done very little on that front, and we have relied on initiatives from the private sector or other levels of government.

For example, one of the huge success stories in my own province is the Peak of the Market, which is an organization that has done exceptionally well in the province of Manitoba. It has provided educational advertising and a much higher sense of public awareness because of its actions.

Peak of the Market contributes immensely to non-profit organizations and educates the population as a whole in terms of the types of vegetables that they receive. Most importantly, not only does it promote good, quality product for the table, but it always provides a wonderful opportunity for farmers in Manitoba to participate in a program, and working as a collective we are able to see that much more in terms of market share. This is critically important, because it helps preserve the family farm and at the same time provides a world-class product. I am a little biased, but I would suggest we produce some of the best agricultural products in the world.

I think of a product like Manitoba-grown potatoes. We have had recognition throughout North America as one of the better producers of potato. French fries are a big thing in our province, not to mention Old Dutch potato chips, which are manufactured in Winnipeg North. I think there would be a very healthy competition between the P.E.I. spud and the Manitoba spud.

At the end of the day, whether it is Peak of the Market or our farmers' direct sales, they have done a phenomenal job in ensuring that we are able to produce a quality product.

The Government of Canada could be playing a role in this area. I used the potato as just one example of where the Government of Canada could do more with respect to advertising. As opposed to advertising the economic action plan, why does the government not invest some of those dollars in promoting locally grown products, no matter what region the products come from?

I remember driving down a highway a number of years back and seeing signs inviting people to pick their own strawberries. Ice cream buckets could be filled with strawberries. At certain times of the year, some grocery stores advertise discounted prices for blueberries and so forth. We need to understand and appreciate the importance of healthy food. People's diets can be influenced by the products they purchase in different seasons of the year and how they can store certain products during the winter months. So much more could be done to educate people.

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Canadians want to contribute in a more wholesome way toward what they are eating. They are trying to get a better understanding of the food industry. I myself have tried to get a better understanding of local industries beyond vegetables and fruits.

The chicken and pork industries are two important industries. A good percentage of the chickens processed in Manitoba stay in my province. The agriculture critic for the Liberal Party came to my province and we had a wonderful opportunity to tour hatcheries and egg producers and visited a processor. Thousands of chickens are processed on a daily basis. Even though the bulk of them are used for local consumption, some of them are exported.

The pork industry in Manitoba processes millions of pigs on an annual basis. The agriculture critic and I toured places like the Maple Leaf plant. We also had the opportunity to visit some pork farms. This is an incredible industry that provides a high-quality product. This industry could continue to grow if we did more in terms of diversification, education, and consumer awareness. Our high-quality product could continue to grow, and that growth would ultimately add more jobs and value to our economy. I would argue that the final product would be that much better as well.

I also want to comment on our dairy industry. This industry has done exceptionally well through supply management, something we are committed to maintaining. This industry provides quality milk, cheese, eggs, and so forth, the essential foods that Canadians need.

If we want to be fair, we need to recognize the importance of the role farmers play in our food industry. We should have a strategy in place that would not only recognize their important role but would also encourage and enhance the great potential for growth in that industry.

● (1110)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to the bill to promote local foods, which was introduced by my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry.

Before I begin, I would like to thank my colleague for introducing this bill. This bill introduces a pan-Canadian local foods strategy and a policy to encourage federal institutions to purchase those foods. It shows leadership by addressing an issue that is very important to the people in my riding.

To illustrate how important local foods are to my region, I would like to read from an email sent to me by Nicolas Villeneuve, a municipal councillor in Saint-Joseph-du-Lac. He is also an apple producer and president of the Deux-Montagnes UPA. When I contacted him to talk about my colleague's proposed strategy, this is what he told me:

The bill you sent me is of critical importance to producers in our region. Government support for local foods is essential to ensure ongoing economic progress in the regions and to safeguard the progress our agricultural undertakings have achieved. Buying local foods will ensure Canadian food sovereignty, which is critical for both current and future generations.

This also represents a long-term effort to protect the environment, if only by reducing our food miles.

By buying locally, we can optimize people's access to the highest quality foods because quality control on imported products is not subject to reciprocity requirements with respect to production standards.

These are the basic elements that I want to bring to your attention in connection with this bill.

I would like to thank Mr. Villeneuve for providing such an excellent summary of why buying local foods is good for our regional economies, not to mention our agricultural sector, food sovereignty and the environment.

Mr. Villeneuve supports this bill, just like many other organizations. I would like to list just a few such organizations that people in my region think are very important: the Association des marchés publics du Québec, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Union des producteurs agricoles, Solidarité rurale du Québec and Equiterre. The list goes on and on.

These organizations represent the people in our communities who are out there, close to the land. They realize that this type of bill is necessary if we want to ensure that the buy local movement really takes root.

I would like to talk about the research conducted by Equiterre in 2011, which is laid out in a document titled "Eating at home".

I would invite those interested in this topic to visit the organization's website, where the research is available in its entirety. This study highlights the fact that Canadians want to eat local. In fact, three out of four Canadians want to. It is also important to define what "eating local" means.

The survey reveals that in situations of choice, Canadian consumers prefer to buy a domestic product, even from a faraway province, rather than an American product that was grown nearer by. Not just a question of kilometres, buying local is an act that is motivated by political rather than environmental concerns. When respondents were questioned on ideas associated with local foods, 94%...of them emphasized that they encouraged the local economy.

I find that very interesting. When I see those statistics, I am proud that Canadians want to support our own producers so that our communities will be stronger and more successful. Unfortunately, there is a disconnect between what we want to do and what we actually do.

That is why this study also looked at the barriers to buying local foods. One of the most common barriers is the fact that local products are not always clearly identified. The study demonstrates that:

● (1115)

The results of the survey suggest the need for a basket of strategies for easier identification of local products, beyond just a logo or a brand. Strategies could be adapted to the consumer, depending on the environment (rural/urban, province of residence) and the place of purchase. For example, a neighbourhood greengrocer that has the complete confidence of its consumers could rely exclusively on identification at the display or a procurement policy, whereas bigger chains may need to use a label. Employees could also be provided with better training to help them guide clients towards local products.

This is important. We really need to identify best practices in this area and look at the studies that civil society organizations are doing in order to develop a pan-Canadian strategy.

Private Members' Business

The study indicates that, in addition to product identification problems, the incentives with the greatest impact on consumers are availability, accessibility, price and information. These incentives must be discussed and included in any plans for a pan-Canadian strategy.

The conclusion of the report indicates that we cannot merely rely on the isolated efforts of individuals who are already convinced of the benefits of buying local. We need to do more. Consumers are willing to eat more locally grown fruits and vegetables, but all of the necessary conditions for this to happen have yet to be fully realized.

I would like to once again reiterate that this study is available on the Equiterre website, and I encourage anyone who is interested to read it. It is very interesting. However, I would really like to assure my colleagues opposite, who may not trust Equiterre, that buying local is not just a fad. It is a major policy decision that has a widely recognized positive economic impact, particularly for a region like mine.

The study was even picked up by the Quebec magazine *Les affaires*, which once again pointed out how important it is to the Quebec economy to promote buying local. This shows how important it is for governments, like the Government of Quebec, to get involved. The Government of Quebec is very supportive of buying local. The federal government must also take some leadership with the provinces, while respecting their jurisdictions, of course.

The business community, the agricultural industry and environmentalists all agree that a partnership between the federal and provincial governments will allow much more to be accomplished.

For example, the Centre local de développement de Mirabel in my riding published a really interesting article about buying local in its economic newsletter, MIRADEV. It answered two important questions in this regard. First, why is it important to encourage our local farm producers? Second, what are the advantages of buying local products?

The answer to the first question is very important and speaks to those who are community-minded. Throughout the entire Mirabel region we are lucky to have farmers who sell their products directly from their farms at a kiosk, a shop or a greenhouse. It is also possible to pick your own fruits and vegetables or have baskets of produce delivered to your home. If every consumer added \$30 worth of Quebec-grown food to their grocery cart every year, sales would increase by \$1 billion over five years and roughly 100,000 jobs would be created throughout Quebec. That is quite significant.

The benefits are clear. In addition to creating jobs and helping our local economy, we are getting fresh food that is often harvested very nearby. We are also reducing greenhouse gas emissions, again because there is less movement of goods. We are also directly supporting our farmers and promoting healthy eating. That is important because when we buy locally, farmers use as little pesticide as possible in order to protect the environment.

I will close by saying that this is very important for my region, where the economy survives truly because of the local farm community. That is why I stand by my colleague who is proposing

this pan-Canadian strategy. I invite all members of the House to support this bill.

• (1120)

[English]

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise to speak in strong support of Bill C-539, an act to promote local foods. I will begin by paying tribute to the energetic and thoughtful work undertaken by my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry.

I will first set the stage with some local context. My riding, Victoria, sits at the tip of an island that is home to nearly 3,000 farms and has a strong tourism sector. Almost one in five service sector jobs on Vancouver Island is connected directly or indirectly to food. However, over the last half century, the balance between locally grown and imported food has tilted dramatically. Once we grew 90% of our food locally; now, we import 90%. Partly for that reason, Victoria is at the leading edge of a trend that we are seeing in communities across the country, and indeed across the world, a growing interest in buying foods that are produced locally.

The majority of Canadians who choose to buy local do it to support farmers as well as their community economy, but they do it for other reasons too. Canadians know that by reducing the distance that our food travels means fresher produce in our kitchens, cleaner air in our communities, and fewer climate-changing emissions across Canada.

Late last year, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of Victoria public market. The market is the fruit of years of work by community activists like my friend Philippe Lucas, who wanted a downtown space to connect local farms with urban residents. It has been enormously successful.

My riding is also home to an innovative community organization called LifeCycles, headed up by the indefatigable and imaginative Jeanette Sheehy. LifeCycles partners with municipal governments and public institutions to give residents the tools and skills they need to grow, prepare, and preserve local foods.

In backyards across our city, hundreds of volunteers harvest up to 40,000 pounds of fruit each year, for example. That food is distributed through a network of some 40 agencies, such as food banks and community centres. They also have relationships with businesses supporting their work through social enterprise initiatives, such as selling apples to a local cidery, for example.

LifeCycles also works with eight elementary schools to integrate schoolyard vegetable gardens into their curriculum. Through these programs, more than 750 elementary school students each year learn how to grow their own nutritious food, right in their backyard. LifeCycles is a perfect example of the diverse range of benefits we can see in our economy and our communities when we support local agriculture.

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Elsewhere in British Columbia, I would like to acknowledge the work of initiatives like Farm to Cafeteria, a not-for-profit agency, with a ten-year track record of creating and supporting local food projects in public and private institutions. A provincial program called “buy B.C.” works with industry to highlight local food products.

This past weekend, I visited Moss Street Market, one of the remarkable urban neighbourhood markets in Victoria. Like the amazing James Bay market, it is thriving. These neighbourhood markets not only provide an important outlet for local farmers, they serve to create something perhaps even more important: community. They create community. They bring neighbours and families together in an outdoor space to mingle and enjoy each other's company.

In Victoria, across British Columbia, and across Canada, the trend line is clear: the numbers of farmers markets have doubled over the past two decades. Even though we still buy the majority of our food from grocery chains, collaborative efforts by provinces and industries are promoting local foods that people want.

In response, other levels of government have taken action. Municipalities have introduced local procurement programs, and just last year, Ontario and Quebec introduced policies and legislation on local food, yet the federal government has no policy to encourage this positive trend. That is why Bill C-539 is so essential.

I am proud to support the bill, as a member of the only party in this House to demonstrate its commitment to supporting Canadian farmers by promoting local foods.

• (1125)

I would like to acknowledge the work of my colleagues, the member for London—Fanshawe and the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, who tabled bills in the last Parliament to give preference to Canadian products in government procurement and provincial transfers.

Canadians are making their preference for local foods known in the marketplace. Businesses are adapting. Community organizations, like those I mentioned in Victoria, are spreading the social and economic benefits of local agriculture around our communities. Governments at the municipal and provincial levels are waking up and noticing. The federal government must, too, and show some leadership. This bill would provide a road map for doing so.

What would the bill do exactly? First, very thoughtfully, it would enable federal and provincial ministers of agriculture to develop a pan-Canadian strategy to define “local food”, something that is not that easy to get our heads around.

In some cases it is easy, such as on Vancouver Island, where we have set definitions by geography. In other cases it is not so easy, such as in Ottawa and Gatineau. How do we define “local” when products cross provincial borders? How far should the distance be from the marketplace? Those are the sorts of things that need to be addressed as job one, and the bill would do just that.

Secondly, the bill would provide for the development of a local foods procurement policy for government institutions. It would task the Minister of Public Works and Government Services to develop

such a policy and to implement it no later than one year after this legislation would come into force.

I also want to emphasize that the bill has shown great sensitivity to the division of powers in the Canadian federation. It would ask the federal government to first consult the provinces and stakeholders, such as producers, before it introduced this pan-Canadian local food strategy, and to develop a policy to encourage government institutions to purchase this food. In other words, the primary goal is to promote locally grown food and support Canadian producers, but always looking out for the division of powers in the Canadian federation so that we can work together, not at cross purposes.

Great care has been taken to confirm that such a local food procurement strategy would be consistent with both our internal trade and international trade obligations. That is very important.

Farmers in Canada are often facing a crisis. In my part of the world, the price of land is absolutely enormous, and it is very difficult to encourage young people to go into farming as a result. Not only that, there is a government at the provincial level that has introduced Bill 24, which appears to be trying to take away the preservation of the agricultural land reserve that was introduced by a former NDP administration to preserve the space and land on which agriculture can take place. That is something which is so vital. I would like to salute the efforts of my colleague, MLA Lana Popham, in trying to address this apparently wrong-headed initiative.

Creating a market for this product, even when agricultural land is so expensive, and when we have issues such as climate change that address what can be grown and where it can be grown, is very difficult. We need to provide as much support to our local farmers as we can. That is what this bill would be all about.

The bill reflects the NDP commitment to sustainable development. When we buy local foods, we reduce transportation distances and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to the climate crisis we are facing in Canada today.

By way of conclusion, this bill is sensitive to federal and provincial concerns. It would take into account consultations with the producers, the provinces, and the territories. It would develop a local procurement strategy that would be consistent with our trade agreements. Most of all, it would help sustain something that is so vital, which is local agriculture creating community in our country and giving consumers and farmers what we need as we face the future together.

•(1130)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to debate Bill C-539, An Act to promote local foods. I want to acknowledge the extraordinary work of my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry, the former deputy environment critic. She is well versed in the principles of sustainable development and reducing greenhouse gases. Her bill reflects that.

First, I must explain that Bill C-539, An Act to promote local foods, is split into two sections. The first requires the federal government to work with the provinces on developing a pan-Canadian strategy. Essentially, we want the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to sit down with his provincial and territorial counterparts, with farmers and distributors and with representatives of civil society in order to develop a common definition of what constitutes local food, which is not yet defined in Canada.

The pan-Canadian strategy will also create a forum for sharing best practices, promoting buy local and co-ordinating the efforts of producers and distributors. I have talked to farmers in the Lower Laurentians over the past three years and realized that they are not necessarily aware of what they can do, what works and the tools that could be made available to them.

Today, farmers are facing considerable challenges including the increase in production costs, international competition, fluctuating prices and natural catastrophes that are increasingly affecting their returns.

By buying local, we are supporting our own producers and the next generation of farmers. As my colleagues have already mentioned, the agricultural and agri-food sector is very important to the Canadian economy and generates thousands of jobs. Buying local means cultivating our own economy. That is why we have to sit down together and develop a concerted strategy.

There is no federal policy to promote the purchase of local food. However, a number of provinces have already developed such policies. For example, Quebec developed the Proximité program to encourage buying local. The provinces have taken the lead in promoting local foods. A number of other provinces have worked with the industry to design programs that highlight local products, such as Foodland Ontario, the Buy Local BC program and, of course, Aliments du Québec.

Bill C-539 also calls on the federal government to set an example by developing a local foods procurement policy for federal institutions. There are 28,000 federal institutions across Canada, namely agencies, departments, prisons and hospitals. That is quite a few. The federal government can develop a local procurement strategy at these institutions.

What does buy local mean? It means buying products nearby that were cultivated and grown by local people.

During my term as an MP, I have met many farmers and participated in local events that promote local products, such as the Festival de la galette et des saveurs du terroir in Vieux-Saint-

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Eustache and the Fête Champêtre de la Société d'agriculture Mirabel—Deux-Montagnes to name just a couple.

I support the work being done by the Groupe conseil agricole Outaouais-Laurentide. This group focuses primarily on co-operative activities and on pooling development tools to benefit the community. I have spoken with these farmers and learned that they often work behind the scenes. However, they are passionate and make considerable contributions to our community.

What does buying local mean for consumers? Some Canadians will be surprised to learn that local food does not necessarily cost more than food from another province or food that is imported from elsewhere.

•(1135)

Seasonal food generally costs the same price or even less. A number of studies have proven this. In some cases, the food can cost more as a result of production or distribution costs, but even if the price of local food varies, 42% of consumers are prepared to pay a small supplement for local products if it benefits their region's economy.

Do my colleagues know that if every consumer added \$30 of products from Quebec to their grocery cart every year, we would see an increase in sales of over \$1 billion over five years and the creation of about 100,000 jobs in all regions of Quebec? That is a big deal. It shows how important buying local is to Quebec's economy.

I want to share some quotes from some people who support Bill C-539. This is from the Union des producteurs agricoles:

We believe that if this bill passes, it will create some attractive opportunities for agri-food products from Quebec and Canada by focusing on their quality and the economic, social and environmental benefits they represent.

I would also like to share a quote from Equiterre:

This bill will help Canadian farmers, create jobs and reduce the pollution associated with transportation. We think this bill is commendable.

I know that my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry did her homework in drafting this bill. She consulted farmers and other stakeholders. I am proud to support her bill.

In my role as MP for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, over the past three years, I have had the pleasure of working with farmers from the region on a number of federal files. For example, I intervened on behalf of Quebec's wine producers regarding the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's intention to develop an ice wine standard.

For those who may not be familiar with my riding, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the Rivière du chêne winery in Saint-Eustache is the second-largest winery in Quebec, the largest being the Orpailleur winery in the Eastern Townships. The winery has received many awards at prestigious international competitions, proving that our local products are high-quality products.

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I would also like to point out that a group of MPs from the Montreal area submitted a brief before the Montreal metropolitan area adopted its metropolitan land use and development plan. They wanted to stress the importance of maintaining a greenbelt around the Island of Montreal.

I would also like to mention that the NDP has been working on the issue of buying local for some time now. Last year, the hon. member for Welland introduced a buy local bill, Bill C-449, An Act respecting a National Local Food Day. In the last Parliament, the members for Burnaby—New Westminster and London—Fanshawe introduced bills to give priority to Canadian products in the public sector procurement process and transfer payments to the provinces.

It is obvious that this bill is consistent with the NDP's vision of promoting the local economy and sustainable development.

While I was doing research for my speech, I was interested to learn that the number of farmers markets in Canada has doubled since 1990. Between 2004 and 2007, the number of producers who sell directly to consumers increased by 2%. In 2009, there were 2,314 buy local initiatives in Canada. Clearly, consumers want to buy local products. Municipalities and provinces have taken action to promote the idea of buying local.

I believe that the federal government must take a leadership role and sit down with the provinces, stakeholders and experts to help our farmers and develop a buy local strategy.

I invite all of my colleagues in the House to support this bill.

● (1140)

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to support Bill C-539, An Act to promote local foods, which was introduced by my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry. This bill is very important to me.

In my time today, I would like to inject some local flavour into the debate and talk about producers in our regions, who will be the main beneficiaries of this bill. I live in Laval, the suburb north of Montreal. When you talk about Laval, people picture a pretty typical suburb. However, one-third of the land in Laval is agricultural. It includes the very best Saint Lawrence River valley farmland in Quebec. That might come as a surprise to people who do not know my riding. Over 80% of the land in Alfred-Pellan is agricultural. That is a lot of farmland.

People in Laval are extremely proud of our local producers. I am speaking on their behalf today. I have spoken to a number of producers in Alfred-Pellan about Bill C-539. People in Laval are very enthusiastic about the bill introduced by my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry.

If we take a close look at this bill, we see that its main purpose is to promote local foods and support Canadian producers. Its primary goal is to support local producers all across the country. That is because producers are grappling with major challenges such as rising production costs, pressure due to global competition, which is being felt more and more keenly in our ridings, fluctuating prices and natural disasters, which are having an increasingly significant impact on agricultural yields.

By buying locally, we are supporting our own producers and the next generation of producers. That is the key element of this bill. Anyone familiar with the challenges facing farmers knows how important it is to find the next generation. Since I was raised in Laval, where I was surrounded by producers, I have a lot of friends who farm and acquaintances who are the next agricultural generation. I have observed that our young people cannot make a go of it in the existing agricultural system.

I would like to give the House a few examples. I am thinking, for example, of my friend Pierre-Luc, of Cultures Chouinard, who does not live in Laval but is from Rivière-du-Loup. He grows squash and potatoes. It was very difficult for him to take over the farm. It is a very large farm that covers a huge area in the St. Lawrence Valley. He did not have the means to take over the family farm and so his family had to give him a large part of the farm.

My neighbours in Auteuil, the Ouimet family, have been growing cabbage for three generations on the Rang des Perron. They have discouraged their three children from farming and have suggested that they study and do something else because agriculture is too difficult for today's youth. They wanted their children to have a better future.

I am also thinking of a friend of my brother's who owns Fromagerie du Vieux Saint-François and who has been raising goats for many years. His family has worked hard to raise goats in order to make good local goat cheese. He has always loved this work. The only problem is that there is no future in it because he cannot make a living from the trade that he loves so much. Unfortunately, he is thinking of selling Fromagerie du Vieux Saint-François, which is a jewel in eastern Laval.

These are very sad cases. The Conservative government has shown very little initiative when it comes to helping the next and the current generation of farmers. A pan-Canadian strategy that would have the federal government sit down with the provinces, discuss different solutions and establish a platform for best practices by region is a very smart choice.

● (1145)

This situation must not be taken lightly. Farmers from across Canada could tell us what is happening today. Land is being bought by multinationals and local farmers are struggling to survive. They have to keep restructuring and it takes a lot of money and resources to do that. Unfortunately, they are often saddled with debt.

Supporting them with Bill C-539 would be a step in the right direction. It would send the message that the federal government is concerned about our farmers and buying locally and that it is going to invest in this and sit down with the provinces to see what could be done and to establish a pan-Canadian strategy. It would show that we are taking this problem seriously and addressing it as quickly as possible.

Back home in eastern Laval, we are extremely proud to buy locally. We have a number of magnificent farms that are still locally owned and operated and passed down from generation to generation. There are a number of community initiatives organized every year to support these various farmers and provide the locals with easy access to this local food.

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There are the neighbourhood farmer's markets in eastern Laval, Saint-Vincent-de-Paul and Saint-François. This way, a number of local producers can have a stand at these outlets. These pocket markets alternate between two neighbourhoods that, let's face it, are not as well served when it comes to food security.

For example, we have the Aux vieux chênes farm, which is the only sugar shack in eastern Laval. There is also the Vaillancourt farm. Agathe makes delicious jams and has a number of local products to offer. These farms are often represented at the neighbourhood farmer's market in eastern Laval. This wonderful and popular initiative to support our local farmers is starting its third consecutive year this year. This would be a good practice to share with various other players. I am sure there are others across the country. It would be interesting for people to share their experiences.

The Jeunes au Travail farm has undertaken a wonderful initiative. This organization helps troubled youth between the ages of 16 and 25 reintegrate into the labour market through activities such as Ecocert-certified organic farming. The young people grow organic fruits and vegetables on the farm and also cook meals with local products and the products they grow. The organization also provides training and job skills, as well as psychological and social support to these young people who really need it. The organization is training a new generation of people who are aware of local foods, food safety and high-quality products, which is amazing. When the stand is open, I often drop by to commend these young people who are doing an incredible job. I tip my hat to them, because without them, we would have to wonder about the future. This is a wonderful example of what Quebec's next generation can do.

I must also point out that the big supermarket chains are getting increasingly involved in buying local, doing business with farmers and featuring them in their stores, especially in the summer. This is of course easier to do at this time of year. There are great examples from Laval to Mont-Laurier. We are seeing an interest from the public, community organizations, farmers who are trying to make a go of it, and even big chains at the local level.

In conclusion I want to say that I support the bill introduced by my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry. I hope that my colleagues, regardless of where they sit in the House, will support this bill that is extremely important to all the people I mentioned.

• (1150)

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to rise in the House today to defend my bill and to try to convince other members to vote in favour of it. Farmers deserve nothing less.

We tend to forget that farmers do the work needed to meet a vital need, the need to eat. They allow human beings to feed themselves. We often consider farmers from a purely economic standpoint, but they also play a role when it comes to health and basic needs. It is therefore very important that we support all of our farmers, as my colleague from Alfred-Pellan said, as well as any members of the next generation who want to get involved in agriculture, in order to improve the image of our farmers, who work hard day and night to deal with whatever Mother Nature throws at them. Here in Canada, that is a rather uncertain undertaking. We have seen proof of this

recently. Spring is dragging on and farmers are having to deal with unpredictable weather.

What I am asking the government is very simple. It involves being innovative and showing leadership. It is quite feasible since there are already a number of pan-Canadian strategies out there. All of the stakeholders that I consulted over the past two years, whether it be farmers, people working on agri-food policies, consumers or distributors, want the federal government to sit down with them and with the provincial and territorial ministers of agriculture and agri-food in order to discuss a common definition of buying local. That is no easy task since every region of every province has a different definition and a consensus must be reached.

We must also continue to raise the public's awareness of the importance of buying local and its benefits. As it has been mentioned, foods that are grown locally are fresher and taste better than those coming from other places; moreover, buying local reduces the need for transportation, thereby reducing our ecological footprint. Farming is a sustainable and profitable occupation.

In terms of profits, we need to keep in mind that farmers create more than one in eight jobs in Canada. Each year, they account for 8% of Canada's GDP, contributing more than \$100 billion to the Canadian economy. Farming is a vital part of our economy, and we need to support our farmers. To those who are concerned about international free trade agreements, I would simply say that every agreement Canada has signed includes procurement thresholds that allow Canada to buy locally. Many European Union countries and the United States do it. Why not Canada? Why not lead by example and ensure that we are supporting our own farmers?

There are 28,000 federal institutions across Canada. During the summer months, our farmers grow their vegetables and other crops, and it is much easier for us to support them. Why not do it? It is easy enough. Our land is full of riches. We need to put this policy into practice. There is plenty of support for it.

I would like to thank all of those who participated in the consultations, including my colleagues and the people in my riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry. In particular, I would like to thank Sylvain Gascon from the Huntingdon farmers market, who welcomed me with open arms. He gave me plenty of advice and guidance and put me in contact with many people. Denys Van Winden helped me discover the rich land of Jardins-de-Napierville. He also talked to me about the difficulties that farmers are facing and the optimal level of funding from the federal government for research, young farmers and farming practices. I cannot mention everyone who helped, but a number of economic stakeholders supported me as well, including the local development centres in Haut-Saint-Laurent and Beauharnois-Salaberry, the Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent conference of regional elected officials, and the Beauharnois-Valleyfield chamber of commerce and industry, which was the first chamber of commerce that decided to support this project. I would also like to say a special thanks to my team members who, for the past two years, have supported me and done everything they could to promote this bill.

Government Orders

•(1155)

I am so grateful to Isabelle Bourassa, Glen, Julie and Jean-Marc. I would also like to thank everyone, NDP and otherwise, who supported the bill. It is heartwarming.

I hope that the federal government will finally step up and sit down with the provinces, municipalities, producers and distributors so that this sector of our economy, which feeds the planet, can succeed and so that our producers can be proud of the work they do.

We need leadership and political will, and we also need common sense because this sector is struggling. Since 2006, 8,000 farm families have had to leave their farms because of the federal government's lack of support and vision. That has had an impact on all regions of Canada.

It is important for everyone here and around the world to be able to eat healthy, local food. I hope that all members will vote in favour of my bill.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin) The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin) All those in favour of the motion 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 Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 14, 2014, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1200)

[*English*]

FAIR ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed from May 7 consideration of Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts, as reported (with

amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): When this matter was last before the House, the hon. member for Winnipeg North had completed his remarks but had not yet begun his questions and comments, so we will do those five minutes of questions and comments now.

The hon. member for Malpeque.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, great remarks they were by the member for Winnipeg North outlining fairly strong criticism of Bill C-23, misnamed the fair elections act. It is the foundation, really, of how we elect people in our country. It is a bill that really should be opposed.

I have two questions for the member. Would he explain the importance of having a free vote on Bill C-23? That has been talked about by quite a number of players, and I wonder if he could expand on that. Could he also expand on the government's decision not to compel witnesses? That will certainly impact the ability of Elections Canada to do its job.

If he could answer those two questions, it would be helpful.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I like the way the member said that it is misnamed. It is not the fair elections act. Bill C-23 is far from that. One has only to look at the process by which the bill has come before us, whether it was the conception of the idea; no consultation with the many different stakeholders; the manner in which it was introduced in the House, where there was again no consultation; time allocation at second reading; or committee stage, where there were numerous amendments made that were never addressed in full because of time allocation or restrictions that saw many of the amendments voted on but never commented on. Here we are today, where again, time allocation has been brought forward.

We change one of the pillars of our democracy when we change laws. The government did not work with opposition parties or with Elections Canada, a true independent organization. Rather, it has forced the bill through.

We are calling for the Prime Minister, at the very least, to allow a free vote in the House on this issue, believing that parliamentarians will put democracy ahead of their own party's interests on this issue. It is an appeal to have a free vote.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a significant moment in the House of Commons when the Conservative majority has accepted and proposed its own amendments in the face of massive opposition from quarters that usually support it, like serial editorials in *The Globe and Mail* and Conservative senators. Even the former auditor general, Sheila Fraser, weighed in on bill at first reading, saying the bill was “attack on...democracy”.

In the member's view, with the amendments the Conservatives have now put forward, does he agree with me that while it is a less awful bill, it is still not a good bill?

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. That was well put. It is important we recognize that there was an incredible amount of opposition to the legislation and the manner in which the government brought it forward and attempted to pass it through the system. The way in which the government has treated our elections law is incredible.

As has been pointed out, I would suggest that even with the changes that have made, the legislation still has fundamental flaws. The most significant one is that it has not brought forward the ability to allow Elections Canada or the Commissioner of Canada Elections to compel witnesses. That is a serious flaw. Without that change, how can we possibly support the legislation?

The reason the public wanted to see the election law changed in the first place was to deal with issues that came from the last federal election. Without the ability to compel witnesses, even if we pass the bill as it is today, the election law will be weaker than what it was prior to its introduction. Elections Canada and the commissioner have recognized that point.

Therefore, I would plead with the Prime Minister to have a free vote and then I ask all Conservative members to balance it and vote against the legislation.

• (1205)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in report stage to speak, initially, to my two amendments. I had hoped to have substantive amendments at report stage, but members will recall that the committee was allowed to violate its own rules by rejecting my right to speak to my amendments as they were all gavelled through, all being rejected.

I want to express thanks to the minister for being willing to listen to the extraordinary course of denunciation for Bill C-23 at first reading. Unfortunately, even with the number of government amendments that were accepted at committee, the bill falls far short of being what is required to go by the name of a “fair elections act”.

Briefly speaking to the amendments I put forward at committee, which were defeated, it is a shame that we missed the opportunity to open a discussion on getting rid of first past the post and moving to proportional representation. I think most Canadians would be shocked to find that the leaders' debates are not controlled by anybody, and that the opportunity to create a fair system, as presented at committee by Democracy Watch, was not supported by any party other than the Green Party.

On the requirements for people to bring so many different kinds of ID, we still do not have the kind of system that is as reliable as the election system before the Conservatives' first round of amendments back in 2006. I wish we had ensured non-partisan poll workers.

There were numerous amendments from the Liberals, the New Democrats and the Greens on many of these points, for fairer financing and to take steps to increase voter turnout. I also put forward an amendment in the committee to shift the day of advanced polling from a Sunday. I will try again with the amendments I have before you, Mr. Speaker.

All the amendments from any opposition party were defeated at committee, with one exception, which was one when the

Conservative leader on the committee pointed out that the Conservatives had been prepared to do that themselves had they had the chance.

My two amendments would do one thing, which would be fantastic, and that would be to remove the name of the political party from the ballot next to the name of the candidate. This would do a lot to reduce the excessive control of political parties over the electoral process. We used to have elections with just the name of the candidate, right up until about 1970.

I want to devote the rest of my time this morning to why we had the demand for a fair elections act, and how this bill falls far short. The initial attempt, and this was mentioned by other members in this place, the initial cry for reform of our electoral process, was in response to efforts at electoral fraud.

The amendments I put forward at committee, among those of Liberals and the New Democrats as well, called for giving Elections Canada the investigative tools it needed, such as subpoena powers, the ability to look into efforts, or deliberate efforts or actually successful efforts, at voter fraud and electoral interference that changed the course of elections. These amendments were defeated.

People have been very quick to assume that the so-called robocalls affair is now settled and nothing untoward took place there. Because the bill remains inadequate to the task of investigating electoral fraud, we can continue to have events like the 2011 robocall scandal without the tools of Elections Canada to respond.

In the time I have remaining, I want to ensure that it is understood we have not once, not twice, but three times seen quite scandalous interference in our electoral process, that if we had heard of these stories from some third world country, with some kind of tinpot dictatorship that ran fake elections, we would just shake our heads and say, “I guess that is how it happens in other countries”.

The first example was the 2005-06 election, when we had the deliberate interference in the election by our state police, the RCMP. We never got to the bottom of why Commissioner Zaccardelli broke all RCMP protocol and issued a press release during that election. According to a finding of fact by the Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP, Paul Kennedy, the interference of the RCMP both violated its normal procedures and changed the course of the 2006 election. We had no investigation because there were no subpoena powers to call Mr. Zaccardelli to explain himself.

Second, we had an event that took place in Saanich—Gulf Islands in the 2008 election. I was not personally involved, but it was very clear, and there were multiple complaints to Elections Canada and the RCMP, that a robocall effort targeting NDP voters changed the course of that election and allowed a Conservative to be re-elected when all evidence suggested that he would not have been.

Government Orders

• (1210)

The Liberal candidate was neck in neck with the Conservatives. There was no NDP candidate on the ballot as he had withdrawn. An election eve round of phone calls went out spoofed as though they were from the NDP. The spoofing term is one I have learned. It is the technical term for using the home fax number, as it turned out, of an NDP volunteer to make it appear the calls originated from the NDP, urging people to get out and vote for a candidate who was no longer capable of election because he had withdrawn from the race. That changed the course of the election. Elections Canada was asked to investigate, but basically threw its hands up and said that it could not find anything, that there was nothing to see, so we should move on.

If members detect in my presentation that I am critical of the failure of Elections Canada and the RCMP to get to the bottom of that, everyone can bet I am critical. They utterly failed to defend the integrity of the election process in Saanich—Gulf Islands in 2008, and they did it again in 2011 with the robocall scandal. Thank goodness, The Council of Canadians took the matter to court. Other than Federal Court judge Mr. Justice Mosley, we would not have somebody as a finder of fact going over all the evidence and giving us clear foundational information of what occurred. Right now, the Commissioner of Canada Elections, Mr. Yves Côté, in his report of last month, once again told us that there was nothing to see, so we should move on.

Let me review what Mr. Justice Mosley found, because it is important to put it on the record to understand why this bill is so inadequate and why it should have the powers of investigation to ensure that crimes like this are properly investigated. Mr. Justice Mosley found as fact that "...there was a deliberate attempt at voter suppression during the 2011 election". That was at paragraph 177.

At paragraph 224, he wrote:

I am satisfied that it has been established that misleading calls about the locations of polling stations were made to electors in ridings across the country, including the subject ridings, and that the purpose of those calls was to suppress the votes of electors who had indicated their voting preference in response to earlier voter identification calls.

At paragraph 246, he stated, "I find that the threshold to establish that fraud occurred has been met..."

At paragraph 253, he said:

...I don't doubt that the confidence rightfully held by Canadians has been shaken by the disclosures of widespread fraudulent activities that have resulted from the Commissioner's investigations and the complaints to Elections Canada.

As well, he stated at paragraph 256:

...[the...] calls appear to have been targeted towards voters who had previously expressed a preference for an opposition party (or anyone other than the government party)...

On the matter of a smoking gun and who is responsible, essentially in this case we have a smoking gun. We know that thousands of calls were made, including in my own riding and across the country. I wrote Elections Canada with my concerns about these widespread attempts at voter suppression immediately following the May 2011 election. Who was responsible? I have made no accusations as to who I believe is responsible, but Mr. Justice Mosley found as fact the following, at paragraph 245:

I am satisfied...that the most likely source of the information used to make the misleading calls was the CIMS database maintained and controlled by the Conservative Party of Canada, accessed for that purpose by a person or persons currently unknown to this Court...the evidence points to elaborate efforts to conceal the identity of those accessing the database and arranging for the calls to be made...

What kind of democracy is this? We have the evidence of a Federal Court judge, thousands of complaints from Canadians across the country, a Commissioner of Canada Elections who says that there is nothing to look at here and everyone should move on, and we have a bill before us that would do absolutely nothing to prevent the illegitimate use of robocalls in future elections.

I concede to the minister and support the part of the bill that sets up a robocalls registry within the CRTC, but it is not sufficient to deal with the illegitimate use of robocalls and to protect Canadians, Canadian democracy and the integrity of our electoral process. This bill falls far short. This is a dark day for democracy.

• (1215)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, would the member care to comment on the happenings in the committee that was reviewing the bill?

The member proposed that we have a study on proportional representation, but the Liberals voted against it in committee in a recorded vote. We, of course, supported the motion that we should include a study of proportional representation in the bill. Would she comment on the Liberal rejection of this notion?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, yes, I was disappointed. It was a very modest proposal that we open discussion toward proportional representation, which was not supported by the Liberals. I have to say that I was also very disappointed—although the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth did put forward an explanation that was somewhat persuasive as to why his party would not support my amendment—that no one supported my amendment to have some rules to ensure fairness in the leaders debate. I was not without my disappointments throughout the committee process.

I think we need to continue to work to get rid of the perverse first past the post voting system. I commend the NDP for its strong position on that, but I think we need to persuade more Liberal and Conservative members. Within both of those parties, I know there are many members who find the current system quite perverse and would like to see real reform.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of the leader of the Green Party. I think she hit the nail on the head with her last comment, "This is a dark day for democracy", in terms of the possible passage of Bill C-23.

The member outlined a number of examples in her remarks, and I would add to that with two areas that the Conservative government has undermined. Canada at one time was seen as a model to strive for in terms of how we held elections, Elections Canada, and so on. The same thing with Statistics Canada; we used to be seen as one of the best in the world, but under the current government, we are seen as one of the worst.

Government Orders

I have two questions for the member. One, given how seriously Bill C-23 undermines our ability to police elections and investigate foul play, does it make it possible for a government to either buy or steal an election? Two, should we be calling for United Nations observers in Canada for the next election?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I am going to assume the last part of the question from hon. member for Malpeque was somewhat ironic and so I will address the first part, which is: should we be concerned?

I believe based on everything I have studied, and I have really dug into what happened in Saanich—Gulf Islands in 2008, that it was a pilot project in seeing whether the use of robocalls could change the course of an election. Elections Canada and the RCMP failed to get to the bottom of it. Some of the complainants told me that the RCMP told them that it could not figure out who was responsible because the phone number originated from the United States.

Had that been a child pornographer or a human trafficking ring, I would like to think that we would have investigated who originated those phone calls. The idea that because they originated from the U. S. we could not find out, or that it was really small potatoes whether it was Gary Lunn or Briony Penn who won that election, is not the case. It is very large indeed in Canadian democracy when a fraudulent robocall marketing attempt can change the course of an election.

I believe that the failure to investigate Saanich—Gulf Islands in 2008 led directly to a more widespread use of robocalls in voter suppression in 2011. I shudder to think what the failure to properly investigate what happened in 2011 will mean for future Canadian elections.

• (1220)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise today in support of the fair elections act, a bill that would keep democracy in the hands of everyday Canadians by putting special interests on the sidelines and rule breakers out of business. It would be easier to vote and harder to break election laws. It would close loopholes to big money in the political process. It would make the rules easier to follow for honest participants in democracy and more difficult to break for those who would undermine the system.

Let us review the measures that are contained in the fair elections act. However, before we do, I am gratified by the great support this bill has received from the beginning from across the country. Polling data indicated that even before our government announced its willingness to amend some of its measures, Canadian people overwhelmingly supported the contents of this legislation.

Let me start with the section that has garnered the most public support, and that is the government's decision to protect our system against voter fraud by ensuring that every single voter who casts a ballot uses ID to do so.

Previously, it was possible for people to walk in to vote at their local polling station and, without presenting a single piece of ID, identify themselves through a process called “vouching” and cast their ballot. Under the fair elections act, that would no longer be possible. All voters, regardless of whether they have someone

vouching for them, would be required to produce identification demonstrating who they are. If that identification does not have an address on it, as increasingly ID lacks, the voters would be able to co-sign an oath with another elector as to where they live. That being said, after the election is done, Elections Canada would be required to compile a list of all oath-takers to check for duplicates in order to find out if somebody voted more than once through this process. There would be a mandatory external audit that would be required by law to ensure that Elections Canada follows all of these steps as they are laid out in the legislation.

The unreliable and often inaccurate voter information card would no longer be acceptable as a form of ID. In the last election, the cards had errors in about one in six cases. That meant that millions of Canadians either got the wrong card, no card, more than one card, or a card with false information contained on it. Allowing people to use false cards of this kind for identification presents obvious risks of abuse. The information card would be returned to its original purpose, which is to provide people with information on where to cast their ballot rather than as a means to identify the person and his or her residence.

Elections Canada would have an opportunity with this bill to focus its attention on its core mandate; that is to say, running free and fair elections. The bill would remove from the scope of the agency's mandate those things that are not really core functions of an election agency. For example, investigations of alleged breaches of the act would no longer be within the scope of Elections Canada's mandate. The investigator would become independent, and would serve in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. That might bring back memories because prior to 2005 the investigator and the prosecutor were not only in the same office, they were the same person. That process worked reasonably well, but the missing ingredient all along has been independence. The fair elections act would ensure that the investigator is completely independent; that is, independent from the elected government, independent from political parties, and independent from Elections Canada.

• (1225)

In other words, all the actors who could potentially be investigated for allegations of wrongdoing under the act would be explicitly removed from any involvement in the office of the investigator.

Not only would the investigator have the power to choose his or her own staff, direct his or her own investigations, and serve for a fixed term without being fired without cause, he or she would also be guaranteed that the office would not be occupied by former employees of parties or Elections Canada. This independence would help ensure a high standard of integrity in the enforcement of the legislation.

Another step toward greater consistency with Elections Canada is the requirement for the agency to issue legal interpretations and advanced rulings. Under the existing situation the agency is not required to provide written interpretations of law or to give parties clear answers to questions about what is allowed and what is not. The fair elections act would require the agency to issue advanced rulings to political parties seeking to understand how the rules apply.

Government Orders

As one can imagine, the Canada Elections Act is an extremely complex statute. At times, political parties are not sure exactly what the rules mean or how they will be interpreted, more importantly, by the agency. The fair elections act would require the agency to write down advanced rulings within a confined time period. Those rulings would act as a precedent for all parties. This would allow for a new standard of consistency across party lines for the application of rules. In other words, if one party asks if a practice is allowed and Elections Canada says yes, then that decision will set a precedent and all parties will be able to follow that precedent and comply with the law in the same way as the original party. This is a major improvement over the status quo.

For the CEO to seek the removal of a member of Parliament over a financial dispute about an election filing, he or she would first have to allow that member of Parliament to exhaust all legal challenges. This is another improvement. In other words, judges must be empowered to rule on these financial disputes between elected MPs and the agency before the head of the agency overturns an election result. This would protect the sanctity of the vote, remembering that it is not agency heads who pick members of Parliament but voters. The fair elections act would ensure that voters remain in charge of that process.

Elections Canada would also be required to focus all of its advertising on the basics of voting: where, when, and what ID to bring. It would also be required to advertise specifically to people with disabilities about the special tools available to help them cast their ballots. For example, it would be important for a paraplegic to know that there is a wheelchair ramp located at the voting location. It would be important for someone who is visually impaired to know that Braille services are available. Many of these Canadians are not aware of these services. This law would require the agency to inform them, so that not only would they have the services that they need, but they would know about them before they cast their ballot.

Finally, the fair elections act would add an additional day for voting. Many Canadians are too busy to cast their ballot on election day itself, so the fair elections act would give them an extra day in the lead-up to that voting day in order to cast their ballot and participate in democracy.

The bill in essence would make it easier to vote and harder to break the law. The rules would be clear, consistent, and easy to follow. Once and for all, Canadians would be required to bring identification to prove who they are before they cast their ballot.

These steps move in the right direction and the Canadian people overwhelmingly support them.

• (1230)

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the minister for bringing back vouching for address. The pressure that Canadians mounted over the total gutting of vouching under Bill C-23 eventually caused someone in the government, for reasons to be seen, to return vouching for address.

I would also like to indicate that for all of the times that the minister tried to convince people that voter information cards can be a source of fraud, he has never once been able to show one example, and all his general examples never worked. The fact is that people

need a second piece of ID and if they have received a voter information card that is not their own, in order to vote they have to forge a second piece to do so. How many Canadians would even think about it, let alone do that?

Why did the government not agree to the amendments from the official opposition to require that calling service providers send audio recordings and scripts to the CRTC and that calling service providers have to keep phone numbers? At the moment, they do not even have to keep them, let alone send them. Finally, why did he not agree to require the CRTC to keep all data received for at least seven years?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, on the first point, the NDP members have suggested that we should allow people to vote with no ID whatsoever when they arrive at the voting location. They put forward amendments to that effect, and we have eliminated that. We have ended the process of identity vouching and replaced it with a mandatory ID requirement. If people do not have an address on their ID, they can co-sign an oath as to their residency, but they cannot have their identity vouched for. They will require proof of who they are in writing by choosing from 39 different forms of ID that will help them do that.

As for the issue of recordings of automated calls and scripts, calling companies and those who use automated calls will be required to retain those recordings and those scripts for three years, and those companies will be asked to turn that information over if there is an investigation into those calls.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was quite a bit of evidence about how the CEO and Elections Canada can promote voting and encourage people to vote. One of the programs singled out would be the civics programs, which I think is an ideal program. I think every member here agrees it is a great little program, but the amendments went to a narrowly focused solution as to how Elections Canada can communicate with the public.

Where is the new flexibility for Elections Canada to be able to engage with the public in a way that encourages voting?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it is not the job of Elections Canada to run campaigns. The job of Elections Canada is to inform people where, when, and how to vote. That is what the fair elections act will require all of the agency's advertising to focus on.

We supported an amendment to permit programs in high schools because basically that is consistent with the where, when, and how to vote objective of the agency. Students in pre-adulthood are not really aware of how voting happens; these programs, which basically allow mock elections at schools, would give them that basic information so that when they graduate, they know what elections are about, how they work, and what one does to cast a ballot. However, there is no question that the fair elections act would narrow the focus of the agency so that its advertising focuses on the basics of voting and on no other area.

Government Orders

●(1235)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 52 later today, no quorum call, dilatory motion or request for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair; and that any member rising to speak during debate may indicate to the Chair that he or she will be dividing his or her time with another member.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Members have heard the terms of the motion. Does the hon. member for Niagara West—Glanbrook have the unanimous consent for the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

FAIR ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand here today to speak in favour of the fair elections act, Bill C-23.

We have heard an awful lot of debate, many hours of debate, on this very important bill. We have heard from an almost unprecedented number of witnesses at committee. Over 70 witnesses have appeared before the committee examining this piece of legislation. We have also heard from Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Without question, Canadians have voiced their pleasure with Bill C-23, the fair elections act, because it deals with a number of very important changes to how we conduct elections in our country.

I should also point out, particularly to my colleagues on opposition benches, that although they have raised their voices in protest against the bill, many eminent Canadians who are incredibly knowledgeable about elections have stated that they believe the bill is certainly be a positive step.

I point out to my colleagues opposite that former chief electoral officer Jean-Pierre Kingsley, after seeing the bill and examining it for the first time, said he rated it as an A-. Once that happened, of course, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform said that perhaps through examination at committee we could bring forward some improvements to the bill and turn an A- into an A+.

That is exactly what we have done. We have listened, and listened carefully, to witnesses. We listened to testimony at committee and we have brought forward 45 amendments to the bill that would strengthen and improve the bill itself.

I think that proves quite convincingly to all that we have listened to much of the testimony throughout this proceeding and we have acted to bring improvements to those elements of the bill that needed to be improved.

However, it seems that all of the elements of the bill have been overshadowed by one single area, the area of vouching.

I want to spend the remainder of the limited time I have before me today talking about the changes we have made to the bill that would, in effect, eliminate vouching.

As the Minister of State for Democratic Reform stated just a few moments ago, up until this bill, it had been possible for any Canadian without a shred of identification to come forward to cast a ballot in a general election.

Quite frankly, we just think that is not what Canadians expect in conducting fair and open elections. We believe, at a bare minimum, that individuals should be able to, and must be required to, prove their identity.

Let me state that the overwhelming majority of Canadians agree with our position on this very fundamental aspect of elections. In fact, not only have we heard from Canadians from coast to coast to coast, but there has also been a recent poll that showed with empirical evidence that over 85% of Canadians felt it appropriate that individuals planning to cast a ballot produce identification as to who they are, and over 70% of Canadians agreed with our position that vouching should be eliminated.

For those who are not aware of the term, vouching allows someone to go to a polling station without one shred of identification and ask someone who has proper identification to vouch for them—in other words, to state, “I know this person. This person is a Canadian citizen. I know where they live. They are 18 years of age or older. I know the person's name. Let them have a ballot”.

●(1240)

Canadians just did not feel that was proper. Canadians felt, quite properly, that all those who wanted to cast a ballot and exercise their franchise should, at a minimum, be required to show who they were and show proper identification. The fair elections act would require that. Vouching would be eliminated. If someone does not have the proper piece of identification showing their address, as the minister stated earlier, they will now be allowed to sign an oath that is co-signed by someone who does have proof of identity and address, and then they will be able to exercise their franchise and cast a vote.

When we had debate on this very important question throughout the committee hearings and throughout the debate in the House, if we listened to the opposition, it seemed as though this would be the end of democracy. If people could not vouch for someone without identification, all hell would break loose.

Excuse my language, but I am using a colloquial expression.

That is the farthest thing from Canadians' minds. As I said, over 77% of Canadians felt that vouching should be eliminated.

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I would also point out that in that same poll, which I believe was conducted by Ipsos Reid, the pollsters asked those people responding not only where they lived, their age, and other demographic information, but who they would support in a general election. What did they find? They found that 66% of people who said that they would support the NDP also believed that vouching should be eliminated.

We have the unbelievable situation of the NDP, which is in favour of vouching, finding that the majority of Canadians do not agree with its position, and, more interestingly, the majority of people who vote for the NDP do not agree with the NDP's position. It just goes to show once again that the changes we have made in the fair elections act are what Canadians wanted to see.

There is one final point that I should make on vouching and the contradictory nature of the position taken by the members opposite on both the NDP and Liberal benches.

When they conduct their own elections in leadership campaigns, do they allow vouching? Do the Liberals and the NDP, when they turn to their members to elect a new leader, which both parties have done in the very recent past, allow vouching? No, they do not. They require their own members, before they are able to cast a ballot on who they would like to see as the leader of their party, to show proper identification as to who they are and where they reside.

On the one hand, we have this bizarre situation of the members opposite wanting to allow Canadians the ability to vote without identification in a general election, yet when electing their own leaders, they cannot do that. They say no; when we are electing a leader, we want to protect against voter fraud, so we demand that everyone produce identification showing who they are and where they live. However, in a general election, they take the opposite view.

Frankly, it is not only contradictory; it makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. Canadians have spoken, and we have listened. We have made changes to make elections in this country fairer, more transparent, and more open. It is a good day when Parliament passes Bill C-23.

•(1245)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. He participated in the committee discussions about this process, which was botched from start to finish.

There was no prior consultation, and the Conservatives refused to do consultations across the country during the process. They also limited debate in the House. The Conservatives botched this reform. Never has an electoral reform bill been so screwed up.

In his speech, my colleague said that many experts were in favour of the reforms, but I did not hear him name a single one except for Mr. Kingsley, who ended up changing his mind when he appeared before the committee.

Can my colleague name a single elections expert, other than the Conservatives, who supports his bill?

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, first I would make comment on one of the earlier points in the intervention by my colleague opposite, where he said this process was bungled, and that we did not listen to Canadians because we did not engage in a cross-country tour.

I would point out to the member opposite that over 70 witnesses appeared at committee, and not one witness who was recommended to appear was turned down. Let me reiterate that. Of all the witnesses proposed by members of the opposition benches, not one of them was rejected by our government, and we had a majority on that committee. We allowed every single witness who was suggested by members opposite to come to committee. We did not hold back. We allowed every single person they brought.

Some of the witnesses they brought forward were incredibly partisan in their views. I would point out that the members opposite on the NDP benches suggested that the organization Leadnow.ca would be a credible witness. For those who are not aware of the organization Leadnow, this is a very far left activist group, which is frankly supported by the NDP. During the recent robocall inquisition, they put a position online and gathered 40,000 signatures. However, none of them had any credible information about robocalls. They were just saying that they would like someone to investigate. That is the type of witnesses that the NDP brought forward.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member makes reference to the number of witnesses who came before the committee. I had the opportunity to sit through a number of those witnesses, including the Chief Electoral Officer, the Commissioner of Canada Elections, and other independent organizations who have been fantastic representatives of Canada's democracy.

I want to focus on Elections Canada and the commissioner. Both of them recommended that Elections Canada or the commissioner have the ability to compel a witness. Other provincial jurisdictions of the same nature, independent election authorities, already have that ability.

The issue is, why does the government not recognize and allow for Elections Canada or the Commissioner of Canada Elections to have the ability to compel a witness? What does the government have to hide that would prevent it from allowing them to do the things they should be able to do?

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that certainly during the course of an investigation, officials now investigating any perceived or alleged elections wrongdoing have the same ability as police officers do when conducting their own investigations. There is nothing untoward or unusual, whatsoever.

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However, I want to point out to members opposite, on both the Liberal and the NDP benches, a couple of other points that relate to an earlier question from my NDP colleague, who asked for the names of some other officials who supported the bill. I would point out that the former auditor general Sheila Fraser came to committee. She said that she had a concern with moving the commissioner of elections from Elections Canada over to the DPP offices, only because she felt there would not be adequate communication between Elections Canada and the commissioner of elections.

We listened, and we made changes in the form of an amendment, to allow full communication between Elections Canada and the commissioner of elections. Sheila Fraser would applaud those changes, and I think she is considered by all Canadians to be eminent in her position.

• (1250)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I consider myself lucky to be able to speak to Bill C-23, especially because time allocation has been imposed at every step of the way. This bill has elicited a lot of debate. Thus, we have not been able to talk about Bill C-23 freely or as much as it warrants.

First, I would like to say something about the Conservative amendments adopted at committee stage. I believe that they would not have been adopted without the work of the NDP, especially my colleagues from Louis-Saint-Laurent and Toronto—Danforth.

As soon as the NDP received this bill, we realized that there were major problems and we decided to take action. Unlike the government, we consulted Canadians, we travelled across the country to hear their opinions and we listened carefully to the experts. As a result of our efforts, the Conservative government agreed to back down on some aspects of this bill. Unfortunately, it still contains many flaws.

The NDP, in good faith, suggested almost 100 amendments to improve this very controversial bill. Unfortunately, the Conservatives put their ideology ahead of the country's interests. The only amendments accepted were those to correct some wording or vocabulary errors. No substantive NDP amendment was adopted by the Conservative Party, which naturally had a majority on the committee.

The worst thing about all this is that the Conservative government, by means of its majority in committee, ended debate even before half of the amendments proposed by the NDP were debated. This is indicative of the government's scorn for the democratic process, even though the bill is actually about democratic reform.

I would like to put things in context. During an opposition day in March 2012, following the robocalls scandal, the NDP moved a motion to strengthen the election process. The motion called on the government to introduce a bill within six months of the motion being adopted. We waited much longer than six months.

I would like to point out that the motion was adopted unanimously. Among other things, it sought to strengthen Elections Canada's authority over investigations and presented measures to prevent more fraudulent calls from happening in the future. One would have reasonably expected the government to want to put

things right, but it did not take those measures into account and even made things worse in its bill.

We asked that the Chief Electoral Officer be given more power to conduct investigations and to compel witnesses to appear, for example. Right now, when the Chief Electoral Officer tries to investigate a scandal, such as the robocalls, he does not even have the authority to compel potential witnesses to appear. How can he investigate when the people involved merely have to say that they do not wish to appear? That approach is not working very well. It seems to me that anybody can understand that the Chief Electoral Officer should be able to compel witnesses to appear. The Chief Electoral Officer should have been given more investigative powers to ensure that, in the future, he never finds that his hands are tied and he is unable to make sufficient progress and get the proof he needs, which unfortunately is the case right now.

Not only is the government refusing to give the Chief Electoral Officer the power to investigate, but it is also going to prevent him from educating the public and encouraging people to vote. The only person who can do this sort of work in a non-partisan way is the Chief Electoral Officer.

• (1255)

This work includes encouraging people to vote and finding innovative ways to get young people to vote. The government is now preventing the only person who could have done this in a non-partisan way from doing the job.

These amendments give him back a little bit of power. He will be able to participate in youth engagement programs in elementary and secondary schools. However, unfortunately, he does not have the right to encourage young people between the ages of 18 and 25 to vote. He is therefore only allowed to encourage people who are not yet old enough to vote to exercise the right to vote.

I am very pleased that young people in elementary and secondary schools are being encouraged to learn about the election process and eventually play their role as citizens, but it does not make sense that the only people the Chief Electoral Officer is allowed to approach are those who are not yet able to vote. He does not have the right to talk to students in colleges, universities or aboriginal groups. It does not make sense.

Let us talk about another problem they refused to address. We wanted to keep vouching from the start. They wanted to get rid of it, but in the end they went back on their decision. However, the voter card does not provide proof of address. People like students, seniors and first nations members will have a hard time establishing proof of address.

What is more, the NDP proposed an amendment to include a notice on the voter card that the voter could no longer use that card to vote with or as identification. This amendment seems logical to me, but the Conservatives did not even accept it. This speaks to their illogical thinking.

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I know we are not allowed to use props, but I conducted a little experiment. The hon. member for Manicouagan can attest to this because he counted along with me. I emptied my wallet to see what I had on me. If I had to prove my identification today, in my purse I have 21 pieces of ID with my name on them. However, I have only three cards that prove where I live. In fact, I have to exclude my list of drugs from the pharmacy because it is not an acceptable proof of address. The only things left are my hospital card and my driver's licence. They are the only two ID cards I have in my wallet with my address on them.

Needless to say, not everyone has a driver's licence. As far as the hospital card is concerned, what happens when people have not been to the hospital in 10 years? If they moved, the address on their card might be the one they had 5 or 10 years ago, when they last went to the hospital.

If I did not have a driver's licence and had recently changed my address, I would not be able to prove who I am. However, I am not a member of one of the most vulnerable groups. Imagine more vulnerable groups such as seniors, aboriginal people and students, who already have a hard time proving their identity. What will they do?

I encourage everyone to do a test at home by emptying out their wallet. They will see that their address is not shown on many of their cards. A lot of cards will have their name, but not many will have their address.

I do not walk around with my hydro and phone bills in my purse. Not to mention, I cannot even get these bills mailed to me for free. I get them online, like everyone else. Online bills are not considered original documents under the law. They are just copies printed out from a computer.

The bill still has some flaws that have not been fixed. Since more than 70 people testified in committee and only one of them supported Bill C-23, I think the Conservative government could have shown a lot more openness.

Whether we like it or not, the minister is new to his job. It is understandable that he might not draft a perfect bill. I look forward to my colleagues' questions.

• (1300)

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech. She did a very good job of explaining how hard it will be for people to prove their identity under the new rules. However, my question has more to do with the process of drafting, studying and passing the bill.

Does she think it is okay for a government—any government—to use its majority not only to change elections legislation, but also to limit speaking time during debates and committee meetings?

Does she think it is okay for the Conservative government to use its majority to change elections legislation without consulting anyone and without seeking any degree of consensus whatsoever with the other parties that participate in the electoral process and that will have to work with this bill once it is amended?

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is okay at all. When it comes to reforming our democratic institutions, it is not okay for a government to act this way.

For example, the Government of Quebec held an open discussion among the various political parties about reforming the financing rules. They achieved a degree of consensus. Even though there were disagreements about the exact amount, it was about financing, and the discussion was open. What we are dealing with here is a major reform of our elections legislation, and over and over, the Conservative government limits time for debate.

This attitude demonstrates the Conservative government's complete disregard for our democracy, and I think it is a real shame that this is the message it is sending to the next generation.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her answer.

I have another question about proof of identity, which she spoke about during her speech. The Conservatives often compare means of identification during an election to those used during other processes, such as a leadership race and so on. They seem to forget that, during an election, the right to vote is a constitutional right.

Could she talk about the constitutional right to vote that Canadians are entitled to? Why is it important to protect that right by allowing those who cannot identify themselves to have access to a mechanism that allows them to exercise their constitutional right to vote even if they cannot always provide ID?

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, in order to legitimize a democratic institution, those who contributed to its creation must be able to participate in it.

The Constitution protects the right to vote. The government cannot refuse to allow numerous people to vote under the pretext that they are unable to prove their identity. The government cannot introduce legislation that prevents people from proving their identity when they are able to do so.

I have some concrete examples. Take, for instance, a person in my home town who shows up and does not have any identification. The Elections Canada employee has known that individual for 60 years and has no doubt about who it is because they are from the same town. The Elections Canada employee would be forced to prevent that individual from voting. While there is no question about who the person is, and the employee knows that the individual is not trying to vote fraudulently, the employee would still have to prevent that individual from voting. That makes no sense.

To protect the legitimacy of a government, we need to protect the integrity of the right to vote. Those two elements go hand in hand.

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● (1305)

[English]

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me just say, first, how pleased I am to speak to the fair elections act today. I have been looking forward to it, because I wanted to tell members about a meeting I held in my riding with Port Credit seniors, who were very concerned about the fair elections act. They had been reading a lot about it, specifically in *The Globe and Mail*, and they wanted to know from their member of Parliament what this was all about and how it would actually affect them. The reason I am delighted to speak about it today is that I wanted to tell members what the concerns of those seniors were, and specifically how the amendments introduced on April 24 address the concerns of those seniors in the riding of Mississauga South. Most Canadians, I believe, think those amendments are fair and reasonable and common sense.

Let me begin by saying that the fair elections act was very important for this government to bring forward. Elections must be free and fair, but there were some issues with the Elections Act as it was, and some loopholes needed to be closed. We are fulfilling a promise made in the throne speech with regard to dealing with some of these issues.

First, let me say that I was able to assuage some of the concerns of those seniors. Let me tell you what they were. There were three or four main concerns.

One of my constituents mentioned hearing that there was not enough consultation on the bill. That person had the impression that the bill was somehow introduced and then never discussed again. I was able to say that we had 15 meetings of the parliamentary procedures and House affairs committee, that there were 31 hours of debate on the bill at committee, and that 72 witnesses appeared. That says a great deal about the commitment we have to making sure that we talk this through. Those witnesses, as members know, were high profile and very well informed and were able to give the committee some very good and sage advice.

The 45 amendments that came out of that consultation, 14 of them substantial, I think go a long way to alleviating some of the concerns people have.

One of the concerns that was not specifically brought up at the meeting I am talking about but that was of concern to me was with regard to disagreements about MPs' election expense returns and the rulings the CEO makes. That concerns me as a member of Parliament, because I have heard and read about and seen here in this 41st Parliament situations when the MP and the CEO, the Chief Electoral Officer, sometimes have disagreed about an MP's election expense return. When that happens, the Canada Elections Act provides that the MP can no longer sit or vote in the House of Commons until that election return is amended to satisfy the CEO.

I do not believe that the election of a democratically elected member of Parliament can be reversed. It is the decision of tens of thousands of voters, and no one should have the power to reverse that democratic election without first convincing a judge. The fair elections act would allow the MP to present that disputed case in a court and to have judges rule on it before the CEO sought the MP's suspension.

● (1310)

This brings in the idea of the registry. It is very important that these rulings be presented in writing. That would allow members of Parliament or candidates in the future to reference those rulings. They would be precedent setting. We could look them up. The rulings would provide further clarification. These are the kinds of things that would make our process less opaque. It would become easier for us to follow the myriad rules we must follow with regard to election expenses.

With regard to the CEO and the commissioner, some of my constituents had become concerned that from what they had read, the commissioner would be reporting to the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. I assured my constituents that this would not in any way impede the independence of the commissioner. In fact, it would give the commissioner the ability to investigate, but completely independently, without giving any specifics of a case to the Director of Public Prosecutions. We would extend the time from 45 to 60 days for the CEO to publish that ruling once those investigations were complete. To me, that is an important piece that was missing from the Canada Elections Act.

The biggest concern of the seniors in my riding was with respect to vouching and identification. We had a long conversation about how this would work and what, if anything, had changed. Part of the impression they were left with was that somehow we had changed the number of acceptable pieces of ID. That is not the case. It was 39 pieces before and it remains 39 pieces of acceptable identification. When I told them that for the two pieces of identification, their neighbour or friend or son or daughter would be able to vouch for their address or place of residence, that went a long way to addressing their concerns. All of them have identification that proves that they are who they are, but they were concerned that if, let us say, someone had just moved in with his or her son or daughter, and the election was happening right away, he or she would not have any bills going to that address. It is a legitimate concern, which is why I was relieved when our government decided to amend the bill to allow an attestation, which I think it is officially called, of someone's address.

I also mentioned to the constituents in my riding that in Ontario, there is a provincial identification card. I know this, because I am the mother of two teenagers, and sometimes, other than a student card, which in many cases does not have a home address on it, students do not have identification if they do not yet have a driver's licence. Many of the seniors I spoke to did not realize that one can get a provincial ID card like this one. I know that we are not allowed props, but I have one. It is important for some people to get. I would imagine that other provinces have something similar. The provincial ID card is something folks can apply for and receive. It acts in the same way as a driver's licence. It has a photo, and it would be considered proof of identification as well as proof of address. I wanted to put that out there.

I also want to say that highlighting the deficiencies and addressing them with the amendments has not only improved the Elections Act but has made it fairer and freer. Therefore, I am pleased to support this bill.

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•(1315)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before I go to questions and comments, I want to remind all hon. members of this. The last two speakers have held pieces of identification in their hands. If they are doing that in order to refer to information, that is not problematic. If they use them as visual aids, that crosses the line and becomes a problem.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's comments and I have to add that the people in my riding of New Westminster—Coquitlam and Port Moody were very opposed to the proposed changes. In fact, they were offended by some of the changes. I would add that not only are people very concerned but experts right across the country, including the Chief Electoral Officer, are extremely alarmed at the content of this bill. Even the media is overwhelmingly opposed. *The Globe and Mail* did a five-part op-ed explaining just how bad this bill was. Many people have told me outright that they are extremely concerned and that what the government is doing, essentially, is taking a page right out of the U.S. Republicans' playbook in terms of marginalizing voters in our country.

Why is the government making it harder for seniors, students and aboriginal Canadians on reserve by not allowing the VIC as proof of address?

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased the member referred to the VIC, because it is commonly misunderstood. It does not stand for “voter identification card”; it stands for “voter information card”. It is a way for Elections Canada to inform voters about where they vote, what time they vote and what pieces of identification they can bring to be allowed to vote. However, it is not a piece of identification.

The voters lists kept by Elections Canada are not always perfect. In fact, there are many mistakes on them, and the cards are produced from those lists. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that those cards are not accepted as valid pieces of identification.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the member met with her constituents to try to get a better understanding of why so many Canadians were upset with the way government was changing our election laws. It is somewhat interesting that we need to emphasize this point. The legislation, from its creation to where it is today, is in front of the House for one reason, and that is a majority Conservative Party happens to be government.

There were no consultations outside of the Conservative Party. When the bill went to committee, even when there were independent agencies such as Elections Canada that said the Commissioner of Canada Elections should stay within Elections Canada and even when the Commissioner of Canada Elections appeared in committee and said that his office should stay within Elections Canada, the Conservative majority, time and time again, ignored many recommendations that would have improved the legislation. The legislation, as it is today, is a one-party piece of legislation from its origin.

Given the fact that there are multiple political parties in Canada, does the member not believe in passing an election law that should have at least some form of support that goes beyond the Conservative Party, that would include other political parties or Elections Canada, some sort of consensus?

•(1320)

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Mr. Speaker, I think the consensus is clear in terms of what Canadians want to see, and that is fair elections.

From the Ipsos poll that was released last week, 87% of Canadians thought a person should have a piece of identification to vote. To me, this means Canadians wanted legislation on this, and we have provided that as a government.

Absolutely, there will be disagreement. That is where the consultation came in, and I talked about that at the beginning of my speech. Changes and amendments were made based on the feedback that came from those consultations.

[*Translation*]

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Mother's Day, was a very happy day in my riding. I had the opportunity to visit a seniors' residence, which hosted a number of wonderful activities. Everyone was happy and was having a good time. The weather was nice as well. People were happy and content.

I could not help but think that this was a break for those who had told me they were worried about the election reform introduced by the Minister of State for Democratic Reform. Just a few minutes ago, my hon. colleague from Mississauga South mentioned seniors. Yesterday, older mothers were celebrating, but they also told me that they were wondering where the government was going with this election reform.

They are very worried because they have been voting with their voter information cards for quite some time and there has never been a problem. Furthermore, most seniors' residences have a polling station in the lobby. Everyone knows each other and knows who lives there. These people do not need all kinds of other ID cards.

These people are very worried, and they shared their concerns with me. Furthermore, they are discouraged by this government's attitude, especially in committee, where it imposed time allocation to limit debate. They listened to the testimony from the witnesses who were called at third reading.

The amendments proposed by the Conservatives—we will see later today—do not reflect the amendments our caucus proposed. This leaves much to be desired, since our caucus's slogan is “Working together”.

Unfortunately, members on the other side of the House do not share this perspective. They are stubborn and, since they have a majority on all the committees and even here in the House of Commons, this arrogant attitude leaves much to be desired. My constituents tell me this on a regular basis when they respond to my mail-outs or call me directly. Voters took advantage of my presence in my riding two weeks ago to come and see me. They told me that changes need to be made in the House of Commons.

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Because of the way these people shared their concerns, I do not believe that they intend to wait until October 2015 to see such changes. They are concerned because this electoral reform is going to cause major upheaval. The arrogant and negative attitude of our colleagues opposite bothers people. They think it shows a blatant lack of respect for Canadians.

• (1325)

The Conservatives have demonstrated that lack of respect on more than one occasion, when they have attacked the Chief Electoral Officer, the former auditor general and many politically savvy people with strong opinions. These individuals have told the Conservatives directly not to take this reform any further because it is unconstitutional and undemocratic. However, the Conservatives are not listening.

I would also like to talk about the terrible provisions set out in this bill. I am very concerned about the fact that the Chief Electoral Officer is having some of his authority taken away. Historically, the Chief Electoral Officer has had the mandate to coordinate any action required to elect a government in Canada. If that person has to deal with a lot of statutory or regulatory obstacles, democracy will be dealt a severe blow. Many people are concerned about this.

In previous years, Canada had a very good international reputation. Our country was an almost perfect example of democracy. Human rights were recognized here. Everyone was free. People could work and live comfortably.

In my opinion, this will definitely be the last Conservative government. As we have seen in the past, the Conservatives do not seem to want to let go. The government is being stubborn and wants to cling to power. Since they have a majority, the Conservatives are making all sorts of changes so that they might have the chance to stay in power longer.

A prime example is the Conservatives' current reform of the Elections Act. Their plans will give them every advantage. They are increasing the amount that an individual can donate from \$1,200 to \$1,500. Additionally, candidates can inject \$5,000 of their own money into their own election campaign. This will obviously benefit the wealthy in our society. They will be able to run for office and will have a better chance of winning, no matter the riding.

There is something else bothering many people in Laval and across Canada. I frequently receive letters from people in Ontario, especially members of the Latin American community who know me. They tell me about their concerns, which I forward to their MP. They are concerned that the Commissioner of Canada Elections will lose some of his rights. That is unacceptable.

We are opposed to these election reforms.

• (1330)

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laval for his speech.

I would like to ask him a very specific question about the process that took place while this bill was studied. We know that a bill to amend an electoral law usually entails extensive consultation from the very beginning. The opposition parties and electoral agencies should have an opportunity to explain what is required in our Canada

Elections Act. In fact, this bill concerns everyone and strikes at the very heart of our democracy.

I would like the member to comment on that. Does he believe that the Conservatives' efforts with respect to changes to the Canada Elections Act were sufficient given the magnitude of the bill?

Mr. José Nunez-Melo: Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent.

What happened in committee is troubling. I am not sure if you watch the news on television very often, Mr. Speaker, but nearly all the political commentators have said they are shocked by the attitude of the committee's Conservative majority. The Conservatives did not listen to anyone. They practically muzzled everyone. They said we could bring forward some witnesses, who would each have their turn to speak, but the Conservatives did not listen to them and adjourned the meeting. We put a lot of work into this. We must thank our honourable colleague from Hamilton Centre for standing up to them. That is what happened.

The Conservatives showed a rather arrogant attitude by imposing this reform and making it appear as though they were giving people the opportunity to express themselves. That was not true.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to continue on with the member's reference to committees.

The Liberal Party critic had the opportunity to introduce dozens of amendments, some of which were fairly substantial in their very nature, such as allowing Elections Canada and the commissioner to compel witnesses. The New Democratic Party also brought forward amendments.

As a result of time allocation, many of those amendments were never even discussed. At 5 p.m. on May 1, using its majority, the government passed or did not pass all of the amendments without any due process. That speaks volumes. The same thing applied for second reading and the same thing applies at report stage and will apply at third reading. The government continually uses time allocation.

Bill C-23 is a one-party piece of legislation. It is a Conservative Party bill and that is it.

I am wondering what the member has to say with regard to the way in which the Conservative government has been pushing this legislation through with a lack of respect for the opposition, which in essence, demonstrates a lack of respect for all Canadians.

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

Mr. José Nunez-Melo: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North for his comment and question.

He is absolutely right. He reiterated what we have been seeing in most of the committees with a Conservative majority. What is more, the Conservatives are pushing through their bills and anything else they want.

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The member is right about our caucus, and our representation on such a committee. If memory serves me correctly, a hundred or so amendments were proposed. I think that fewer than half were read, consulted, verified or anything. The Conservatives made it clear from the outset that they did not want to listen. They keep moving time allocation motions and limiting the speaking time of our representatives but never make any mention of that.

My colleague from Winnipeg North is absolutely right. That is their strategy. That is what they want to do.

[*English*]

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to speak to Bill C-23. There has been a lot of misinformation on the subject, and I am happy to have the opportunity to clarify at least some of it, and clarify why our Conservative government is putting forward the fair elections act.

A system can never be perfect, but we can always work toward improving it one step at a time. This is the very reason why the government put forward the fair elections act. This bill is designed to protect the fairness of federal elections and to ensure that all citizens are in charge of our democracy. Democracy becomes susceptible to threat when the rules are not given the proper respect. Therefore, it is our duty as citizens, and as members of the House, to protect its integrity as that in itself protects our freedom to live in a democracy.

The fair elections act would strengthen democracy by making it harder for people to break the law. The act would implement 38 of the Chief Electoral Officer's past recommendations. The first of many changes would be the process in which the commissioner of Canada Elections is appointed. It would establish that the commissioner is to be appointed by the director of public prosecutions for a seven-year term and could not be dismissed without cause. The commissioner would have full independence, with control of his or her staff and investigations. The act would permit the commissioner to publicly disclose information about the investigations when it is in the public interest, which would improve transparency.

The act would add a section that deals with voter contact calling services. Among other things, this section would require that calling service providers and other interested parties file registration notices with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, provide identifying information to the commission, and keep copies of scripts and recordings used to make calls. It would become a requirement for the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to establish and maintain a registry, to be known as the voter contact registry, in which the documents it receives in relation to voter contact calling services are to be filed.

The fair elections act would give law enforcement more tools to protect the integrity of our elections by allowing the commissioner to seek tougher penalties for existing offences. It is our full intention to not allow a fast and loose approach with the rules of democracy. For more serious offences, the bill would raise the maximum fine from \$2,000 to \$20,000 on summary convictions, and from \$5,000 to \$50,000 on indictment. For registered parties, it would raise the maximum fine from \$25,000 to \$50,000 on summary convictions for strict liability political financing offences, and from \$25,000 to

\$100,000 on summary convictions for political financing offences that are committed intentionally. For third parties that are groups or corporations that failed to register as third parties, the bill would raise the maximum fine to \$50,000 for strict liability offences, and to \$100,000 for offences that are committed intentionally.

By establishing tougher penalties, our Conservative government would deter the occurrences of offences, intentional or unintentional.

• (1340)

To encourage voter turnout, the bill would make it easier for voters to participate in the democratic process. The fair elections act would provide an extra day of advance polling. The additional day of voting would take place on the eighth day before polling day, creating a block of four consecutive advance polling days. This amendment would surely make it easier for Canadians across the country to vote.

It would also improve transparency by allowing the establishment of an advisory committee of political parties to provide advice to the chief electoral officers on matters relating to elections and political financing. It would amend the act to provide for the appointment of field liaison officers based on merit, to provide support for the returning officers, and to provide a link between returning officers and the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The fair elections act aims to respect democratic election results. There are occasions, and my colleague spoke to this before, when the Chief Electoral Officer disagreed with the elected MPs' election expense returns. When this occurs, the MP can no longer sit or vote in the House of Commons until the expense return is changed to the CEO's satisfaction. This prevents the democratically elected member of Parliament from representing his or her constituency. The fair election act would allow the MP to present the disputed case to the courts and to have a judge quickly rule on it before the CEO makes the suspension.

In Canada, we are seeing a trend where money from special interest can drown out the voices of everyday citizens. The fair elections act would let small donors contribute more to democracy and prevent illegal, big money from sneaking in the back door.

Although the fair elections act would allow small increases in spending limits, it would be done to ensure that parties have enough resources to increase their outreach efforts and help encourage voter turnout. At the same time, this bill would impose tougher audits and penalties to enforce those limits.

This bill would help ensure that voter fraud does not occur by strengthening the rules around voter identification. With respect to voter ID, the act would be amended to require the same voter identification for voting at the Office of the Return Officer in an elector's own riding as it requires for voting at ordinary polls. It would also prohibit the use of voter information cards as a proof of identity.

Government Orders

It would eliminate the ability of an elector to prove their identity through vouching, and require an elector whose name was crossed off electors' lists in error to take a written oath before receiving a ballot. I want to explain why this is important. With a democracy comes responsibility. As a voter, I am responsible for providing proper identification so that I can participate in the democratic process.

Voting is one of the most important privileges and duties that we get to enjoy, so it is extremely important that we do not treat it lightly, that we take it seriously and meet all of the requirements.

Members of all parties have noted that the rules can be unclear. It is our intention that the fair elections act would fix that identified problem by making rules for elections clear, predictable, and easy to follow. These are a few changes that are proposed in our bill. I believe that the fair elections act would protect the integrity of fair elections by improving transparency and enacting tougher penalties for rule breakers.

What our government understands is that Canadians overwhelmingly support this bill. As was mentioned before, 87% of people polled believe it is reasonable to require someone to prove their identity and address before they vote.

• (1345)

In conclusion, I would like to ask all members of this House to support the bill in order to bring democracy in this country to a higher level.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the remarks made by my colleague from Mississauga East—Cooksville. I am a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which studied this bill. I would like him to comment on the fact that most of the hundreds of amendments the opposition presented could not even be debated in committee, and that even the amendments we were able to debate were systematically rejected, without exception.

However, some of the amendments were absolutely reasonable and would really have improved the bill.

I asked several direct questions because I wanted answers about how some parts of the bill would affect our democracy. The Conservatives provided no justification whatsoever for some of their changes.

I would like him to justify that kind of attitude with respect to such a significant act, the Canada Elections Act, and with respect to changes that will affect our democracy in general.

[*English*]

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, this is a process that every bill goes through. We have debate in the House at second reading, then third reading, final reading. The bill goes to the committee and is discussed. There are some amendments that will be voted on, I believe, today. Some amendments are accepted in the process and some are not. This is a democratic process.

We, as members of Parliament, represent our constituents, and I suppose every member has had some kind of contact with constituents on this bill. I did. I received responses. There are some

people who are against it. However, in my riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville, most of the responders strongly support the bill.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important that we are very clear that this is not a normal piece of legislation. This is a law that would change the rules of the game in terms of democracy.

In the member's concluding remarks, he appeals to members to vote in favour of the bill. He is asking individual members to vote for the bill. I respect that. In fact, the leader of the Liberal Party has challenged the Prime Minister to a free vote on this very important piece of legislation.

The member made reference to bringing democracy to a higher level. Let us talk about the bill and how important it is because it would change our election laws. Let us talk about how it is that the Prime Minister should allow for a free vote on this issue.

Does the member recognize, given the very nature of the legislation from the moment it was introduced to the House to where we are today, that it is important that the Prime Minister allow for members of this House to have a free vote? It would change our election laws, something which would have a very significant impact going forward.

• (1350)

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, I do truly believe that the bill would bring democracy in our country to a higher level.

As I mentioned in my speech, the fair elections act would reflect on the recommendations that were given by the chief electoral officers. It reflects on the fact that there were irregularities in the past elections: reference the Supreme Court case.

This was all taken into consideration and addressed to improve the democratic process at our federal elections.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have this opportunity to speak to you today about Bill C-23 at report stage. We are studying the report that the committee produced about this bill to change our elections legislation.

To begin, I would like to talk about the process because there are some major problems with the process that Bill C-23 has gone through so far. I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for three years now, so I have heard from the Chief Electoral Officer, the Commissioner of Canada Elections and various Elections Canada employees on the subject of our elections legislation many times.

Three years ago, we studied the report of the Chief Electoral Officer, who recommended changes to our elections legislation. He said that parts of the bill should be amended to improve democracy in Canada. We worked on that for months, and the committee produced a report that included an analysis of each of the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations.

Government Orders

After the robocall scandal broke, the NDP moved a motion in the House calling on the Conservatives to amend the Canada Elections Act, in particular to give Elections Canada the investigative powers it needed to request all necessary documents from political parties to ensure their compliance with the Elections Act.

Under the existing legislation, all candidates from each riding and political party must produce the documents requested by Elections Canada, such as invoices or other documentation, to verify their election spending. However, although \$33 million was given to political parties during the last election, these parties did not have to submit any documentation. Elections Canada must simply assume that everything is fine and that the parties are complying with the Canada Elections Act.

I think this is one of the major flaws of Bill C-23. The Chief Electoral Officer has been calling for this very important power for a very long time. This power would help him investigate cases of fraud. However, when Bill C-23 was introduced, the bill did not provide for this power.

The motion I mentioned was unanimously passed by the House nearly two years ago and it contained that provision. However, when the bill was introduced, that provision was not there. I do not know when the government decided to change its mind. Perhaps it was when the court found that it was the Conservatives' database that was used in the robocall scandal. I do not know. The Conservatives tend to be rather unhappy when Elections Canada investigates cases of fraud, since they are generally the guilty ones.

Several months after we moved our motion, the minister of state for democratic reform at the time announced that he would introduce an election reform bill the following Thursday. However, on the Wednesday afternoon, right after the parties' caucus meetings, the bill mysteriously disappeared. Poof, no more bill. It was as though it never existed and it was never mentioned again.

Everyone wondered what had happened and where the electoral reform bill went. We will never know. We do not know what exactly was in the bill. We did not hear of it again until this past winter, when the new Minister of State for Democratic Reform introduced Bill C-23.

Not only does this bill not contain the powers requested by the Commissioner of Canada Elections and the Chief Electoral Officer or any of the requested measures that should be part of electoral reform, but it also includes changes that are both unjustified and downright harmful to our democracy. The government is trying to pull the wool over Canadians' eyes so that they do not realize that it is failing to do what needs to be done to improve democracy in Canada.

For example, how does it make sense to move the Commissioner of Canada Elections into the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions? We have no idea. The Conservatives say that it will make him more independent.

However, both the current and the former commissioners came to tell us that this move would not make the commissioner more independent and that it would instead interfere with his work. The Conservatives are telling us that it will help the commissioner, but the Commissioner himself is saying that he does not need to be more

independent and that he does not understand the need for the changes.

● (1355)

This is all a show to hide the fact that the Commissioner made specific requests. He said that he is the one who investigates electoral fraud, and he told us specifically what would be really helpful to him during investigations. Nothing came of that. Instead, they are playing chess. The pieces are being moved around but nothing at all has changed in terms of the Commissioner's ability to properly investigate fraud.

There have been major problems throughout the process. When the Conservatives introduced the bill, we suggested that it be sent to committee before second reading. Basically, that would have given witnesses the opportunity to talk about what is in the bill. We would have had far greater flexibility to change various elements and produce the best electoral reform possible. That is the goal, really. I am certain that everyone wants that. The witnesses who would have appeared could have told us what needed to be changed.

Then we would have had a meaningful debate at second reading. The Conservative majority would not have imposed its will. The Conservatives decided to change everything just because they felt like it and because it would be to their advantage. This bill amends one of the most fundamental statutes in Canada. It affects 34 million Canadians. It affects every Canadian's right to vote. There was no pre-consultation with the Chief Electoral Officer, the commissioner or the political parties: no one. The Conservatives show up with this bill and force it down our throats, telling us it is good enough.

Now, because we fought quite hard and told the Conservatives that they could not just change the Canada Elections Act like this, they ended up backing down on some of the points that I thought were the most damaging. The only amendments proposed and adopted in committee—obviously those proposed by the government—mitigated some of the most troubling aspects of the bill. However, this does not change the fact that the bill fundamentally poses a lot of problems. Given the choice between the Canada Elections Act in its current form and Bill C-23, even amended, I would choose the Canada Elections Act because this bill includes too many changes and has too many flaws and problems to be acceptable.

In short, when the Conservatives introduced Bill C-23, it was a very bad bill. Currently, with the amendments, it is a very bad bill. The amendments do not go far enough for me to support this bill.

Statements by Members

Now, how did things go in committee? Dozens of witnesses came to tell us that there were major problems with the bill that absolutely needed to be addressed and that the bill did not make sense. Finally, they managed to push hard enough that the government backed down a little on some things. However, overall, did the government representatives in committee listen to the witnesses? Did they really listen to the proceedings and take witnesses' opinions into consideration? I do not think so. The witnesses, who are experts on the subject, raised many points that did not find their way into Bill C-23 or the amendments. I guess we will have to wait for a new government in 2015 before the changes that really need to be made to the Canada Elections Act are finally made.

In the end, in a 21st century democracy and in a country like Canada, which is internationally respected for its democracy, it is a real problem for such a fundamental bill to be changed, introduced and imposed by a majority government that does not hold consultations and does not listen. It does not want to listen to anyone and does not want to hear about any problems with the bill. The government thinks its bill is terrific, and that is that.

The Conservatives really need to do better. They need to hold real consultations. A real reform of the Canada Elections Act is needed.

● (1400)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time provided for government orders has now expired. The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent will have time for questions and comments after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

PHILANTHROPY

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I stand in the House to pay tribute to a very generous and philanthropic Canadian, Mr. Ken Lepin of Kamloops. Earlier this year, Mr. Lepin announced that he would be donating \$2.25 million to Thompson Rivers University, on top of the \$250,000 he had contributed in the past.

This enormous donation will go toward helping a new generation of students passing through TRU in a variety of fields. Bursary prizes are being created or increased for students in trades, science, nursing, business, law, arts, culinary, tourism, education, and veterinary health. That is just to name a few of the areas that will be supported.

Mr. Lepin is a self-made man who has given back to Kamloops in an extraordinary fashion. In addition to this substantial donation to TRU, he has put thousands of dollars into the Royal Inland Hospital, the B.C. Wildlife Park, and the Salvation Army.

Through his generosity and his life's work, Ken Lepin has left his mark on Kamloops, and it is a better place for it. Thanks to the most recent donation, his mark will be left on generations to come.

We thank Mr. Lepin.

[Translation]

SENIORS

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we celebrated Mother's Day. I marked the occasion with a number of mothers who live in one of the many seniors' homes in my riding.

Although we were all celebrating the day, a number of the mothers were worried about their future. They told me they were worried about what the government has in store for them. With regard to pensions, more than 30% of these retired mothers are in debt and 40% of them will soon go into debt. Their access to health care and medications is increasingly in jeopardy.

On top of that, as I just mentioned, there is the bill introduced by the Minister of State for Democratic Reform.

The mothers were happy, and I hope that they will be for a long time. Happy Mother's Day.

* * *

[English]

PANAGIOTA BISSAS

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the *Queen Frederica* docked on the shores of Halifax in late spring 1956, anxiety engulfed a young woman named Panagiota Bissas as she prepared to disembark the ship.

A poor girl, she left her poor village in southern Greece to embark on a journey that brought her to Canada. This, she was told, was a welcoming country, with warm people, full of promise, a place where dreams could become a reality.

She was the first in her family to travel abroad. She came with no money, having responded to a Canadian immigration initiative to immigrate as a domestic maid. She did not speak English or French and had no knowledge of Canadian culture. Like most immigrants, she worked hard and was always appreciative of the opportunities our great nation offered, as she fulfilled her dreams centred around our family.

Sadly, I lost my mother exactly six months before I was elected to Parliament, but I feel her presence here today like all other days.

Today, I pay tribute to all of the moms in this chamber, in my riding of Richmond Hill, and across our great country.

* * *

● (1405)

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Arnold Chan has been nominated as the Liberal candidate in Scarborough—Agincourt for the by-election to be held on June 30.

Arnold has deep roots in the riding, having grown up and gone to school in one of the most diverse communities, which is also home to one of the largest Chinese-Canadian populations in the country. Arnold has had a distinguished career as a lawyer and a community volunteer. He will be a strong voice on issues such as jobs, the economy, immigration, and trade, and will ensure that the people of Scarborough—Agincourt are well represented in Ottawa.

Statements by Members

Arnold will be supported by his family and three children, and he understands the need to help the middle class through hope and hard work.

We look forward, with the support of the people of Scarborough—Agincourt, to welcoming Arnold Chan to the Liberal caucus.

* * *

GLACIER SKYWALK

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will officially open a brand new Glacier Skywalk in our beautiful riding of Yellowhead. I had the opportunity to walk on the wild side to preview this skywalk, and it is truly a breathtaking experience.

This cliff-edge walkway soars almost 1,000 feet above the ground and will give visitors to Jasper National Park an opportunity to explore our spectacular landscape in a completely new way. Located off the Icefields Parkway, the Glacier Skywalk is an interpretive experience that will enable our visitors to learn more about the glaciology, geology, and ecosystem of the world-famous Columbia Icefield.

Jasper Park is a national treasure, and I am very impressed with the efforts that have been taken to provide this new experience to visitors who respect both the environment and the integrity of our landscape.

I invite all hon. colleagues in the House, and people all across Canada, to visit Jasper this coming summer for their very own walk on the wild side.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have been in power for almost a decade, and one thing has become clear: they are waging a malicious war against federal public servants to score political points and hide the failures of their poor economic management.

[*English*]

They unilaterally announced their intention to go after federal public servants' sick days, and are forcing new staff to increase their pension contributions, thereby creating a two-tier system. Conservatives have also gone after retired public servants by limiting future retirees' access to health care. As usual, they consulted no one and silenced debate in Parliament.

[*Translation*]

A number of my constituents are public servants. They come to see me because they are overwhelmed as a result of being asked to do more with less. The stress level in the public service attests to that. Enough is enough. Federal public servants must not bear the brunt of this government's deficit reduction plan. These constant attacks on those who provide our public services must stop immediately.

[*English*]

THOMAS JAMES MITCHELL

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in light of the recent National Day of Honour to commemorate those who served in Afghanistan, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Corporal Robert Thomas James Mitchell of Owen Sound and to recognize his parents, Bob and Carol.

While serving our country in Afghanistan, Corporal Mitchell was unfortunately killed by an insurgent attack on October 3, 2006, at the age of 32. Corporal Mitchell was a beloved husband and father of three children.

I had the honour of meeting with Bob and Carol as they came to attend the National Day of Honour in Ottawa. The support that Bob and Carol give to other military families is immense. Carol still attends the graduation ceremonies at Land Force Central Area Training Centre Meaford to speak to graduating soldiers, while also providing support to other families that have lost loved ones in Afghanistan.

I give my condolences to the friends and family of Corporal Mitchell and commend Bob and Carol on their great contribution to our country. Bob, Carol and the rest of the Mitchell family truly remind us that “Those who wait also serve”.

* * *

SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, NATIONAL MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Frank Plummer recently completed a 14-year tenure as the scientific director of the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

Dr. Plummer's authoritative, calm and intelligent voice is one of the most highly respected of our generation. Under his leadership, the Winnipeg lab blossomed into a global scientific force. During the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, it was Dr. Plummer who Mexico called first seeking help.

Dr. Plummer is a giant among his scientific peers, discovering women in Kenya with natural immunity to the HIV infection. He has made many life-saving contributions to the fight against infectious diseases, for which he has received numerous prestigious national and international awards, far too many to mention.

Interestingly, my kindergarten teacher was Dr. Plummer's mother, my favourite teacher, and I feel honoured to ask that the House thank Dr. Plummer for his service and wish him well in the future.

* * *

● (1410)

[*Translation*]

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is Canada Health Day. What an excellent opportunity to say that the health of Canadians is not a free commodity and that public interest takes precedence over free enterprise in the drug industry.

Statements by Members

The NDP wants to ensure that health care professionals have access to the information they need to care for their patients properly and do their work more effectively. To that end, we need to require that pharmaceutical companies report drug shortages. We cannot rely on their goodwill. I honestly wonder how many more drug shortages Canadians will have to endure before this government finally listens to reason.

* * *

[English]

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, women entrepreneurs make up one of the fastest-growing segments of the Canadian economy but are still a huge untapped engine of economic growth. That is why our government spearheaded an initiative in budget 2014 to encourage leadership and entrepreneurship in young women.

Last week we heard what works with fantastic clarity from two great women leaders: Christine Day, CEO of Luvo, formerly of lululemon; and Heather Kennedy, vice-president of Suncor. It is thanks to champions who got them off the sidelines and encouraged them to run with the ball and take on big challenges like starting their own business.

Our Minister of Status of Women is a huge champion of women. Her champion was Jim Flaherty. My champions were my mom; one of my first editors, Bill Peterson; and Ken King, now of the Calgary Flames.

I challenge everyone listening to champion a young woman so that she can go and be the best that she can be and reach her dreams. It will also be one of the best things we can do for our country.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to celebrate International Nurses Day. I have the honour of practising this profession along with more than 300,000 other Canadians.

Some of my parliamentary colleagues would do well to take inspiration from these exceptional and dedicated women and men who dedicate their lives to serving society.

If each member here looked after the well-being of his or her community in the same way that nurses look after their patients, we would, by far, already be the best country in the world in every way.

Furthermore, a nurse's ability to set aside personal convictions, listen to others, and understand that it is up to the person in front of them to choose and act is something that some parliamentarians should be taught.

Nurses are more than professionals. They are guardian angels who support their patients during the most difficult times of their lives. At one time or another in their lives, every Canadian has needed a nurse, and I think they all experienced the professionalism and generosity of these unique people with huge hearts.

I want to wish a happy International Nurses Day to all the women and men who keep our health care system running.

* * *

[English]

ANAPHYLAXIS

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, May is National Food Allergy Awareness Month, an important reminder that millions of Canadians have food allergies and anaphylaxis and that much more can be done to raise awareness and to support those with this condition.

Last May, the House of Commons unanimously passed Motion No. 230, which states:

That, in the opinion of the House, anaphylaxis is a serious concern for an increasing number of Canadians and the government should take the appropriate measures necessary to ensure these Canadians are able to maintain a high quality of life.

I want to thank the Canadian Anaphylaxis Initiative and Mississauga resident Debbie Bruce for championing this issue. There is no reason someone should become critically ill or die as a result of anaphylaxis. We can do more to make places like airplanes more food allergy safe and to ensure that EpiPens are available.

These groups call on Health Canada and Transport Canada to work with them to improve the lives of those living with food allergies.

* * *

● (1415)

AFGHANISTAN VETERANS

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to join branch president Ken Heagle, members of the Cornwall Legion branch 297, and members of the public to honour the brave men and women who served in Afghanistan during Canada's 13-year mission.

Sergeant Marc Léger, one of the first casualties of the war, was a proud resident of Stormont—Dundas and South Glengarry until his unfortunate death in 2002. His loss and his contribution to our country will be forever remembered.

It was also a very moving experience to witness Libby Pelkey, a mother of two Afghanistan veterans, lay a wreath at the Cornwall cenotaph to honour her son Cody's four tours of duty and her other son Kyle's two tours of duty in Afghanistan.

May 9, 2014, certainly was a day of honour in Stormont—Dundas and South Glengarry. We will remember them.

*Oral Questions***VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since last night the 24-hour sacred gathering of drums organized by the women's committee of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation has been raising awareness about the ongoing tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Mother's Day was selected to begin the 24-hour tribute in recognition of the missing or murdered mothers and grandmothers, as well as those grieving for their lost family members. Today the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples added his voice to theirs and echoed the overwhelming calls for a public inquiry.

[*Translation*]

When the Native Women's Association of Canada identified nearly 600 cases in 2009, this horrible situation was already a crisis.

[*English*]

Recent statistics compiled by the RCMP have doubled this estimate, identifying approximately 1,200 cases.

The Prime Minister needs to listen to the drumbeat and call a national public inquiry now.

* * *

SUPREME COURT OF CANADA

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the law societies and deans of law departments across the country have all condemned the Prime Minister's unprecedented attack on the Chief Justice, and this weekend retired Justice John Gomery added his voice to those condemning the Prime Minister. He said, "I think it's appalling that the judiciary should be used for political purposes in this way and I'm puzzled as to the motivation of the Prime Minister and his office...."

Justice Gomery is best known as the person who got to the root of Liberal corruption in the sponsorship scandal and now, no doubt, he will be attacked by the Conservatives, just as they attacked Sheila Fraser and so many others. In 2006, they included clips of Justice Gomery in their TV ads. This year, he is just another name on the Conservative government's ever-growing enemies list.

Canadians deserve better. They deserve a government that respects Canadians and respects Canadian heroes like Justice Gomery and Sheila Fraser, and next year that is what they will get with an NDP government.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is working to make sure that our correctional system actually corrects criminal behaviour. Recent regulations brought forward by our Conservative government will give our front-line correctional officers better tools to stop prisoners from being able to bring drugs into prisons. It is shocking, but not surprising, that the opposition has rejected these common sense measures and has come down fully on the side of convicted criminals. The NDP public safety critic actually said that rather than cracking down on drug-dealing prisoners, we should give them new addiction treatment, and the Liberal public safety critic worried that

these new tools are blatantly restrictive and will create too much tension.

I want to assure all Canadians that our Conservative government will take no lessons from those who always put the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of victims.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Speaking about victims, Mr. Speaker, the UN Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, did not mince words today when he reported that conditions for indigenous peoples in Canada have reached "crisis proportions".

This is a crisis that has festered under the stubborn, confrontational approach of the Conservative government. Will Conservatives finally take a first step toward building a true nation-to-nation relationship with first nations and launch a public inquiry into the 1,200 murdered and missing indigenous women in Canada?

• (1420)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we are taking action into this very serious issue, and have been since forming office.

In fact, we have taken a number of very important initiatives, not the least of which is renewing the funding for the aboriginal justice strategy. We have ensured that this program, which is specifically designed to reduce victimization and crime overall in aboriginal regional communities, is coupled with numerous efforts, including introducing a number of criminal justice initiatives and giving police more tools to do their important work. Yes, action is very important.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has rejected requests by the Commissioner of Canada Elections to give him the power to compel witnesses to testify in investigations of electoral fraud, a power that exists, for example, at the Competition Tribunal.

We now learn that Conservative Party lawyer Arthur Hamilton was caught giving false information to Elections Canada investigators in the robocall scandal. Is this why Conservatives will not give election fraud investigators the power to compel testimony—because it will be used to prosecute Conservatives who are lying?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Canada Elections conducted an extremely extensive and lengthy investigation into the allegations that the member across the way found, and we came to the conclusion that there was nothing to get to the bottom of.

Oral Questions

As for the powers of that commissioner, he has the same powers of investigation as any police force would have.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is the truth.

After hearing all of the evidence, the Federal Court delivered a clear ruling that the Conservative Party's database had been used to make thousands of fraudulent robocalls. Only the Conservatives' systematic obstruction has prevented the guilty party from being identified.

Does the Prime Minister think it is okay for his lawyer to provide false information to Elections Canada investigators?

Hon. Pierre Poillievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Canada Elections conducted an exhaustive investigation into this matter. He found that nothing happened. The investigation proves that the allegations by the New Democrats and other partisan individuals were false. It is time for the NDP leader to stand up in the House and apologize for those false allegations.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, under the Conservatives' watch, there was a net loss of 30,000 jobs in Canada, making this one of their worst months when it comes to the economy. Today there are almost 300,000 more Canadians unemployed than before the 2008 recession.

Under the circumstances, will the minister reconsider and maintain the \$1,000 tax credit to help small businesses create jobs?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is focused on what matters to Canadians, namely jobs and economic growth. The employment rate might be unstable from one month to the next, and we sympathize with the Canadians who lost their jobs in April. Nevertheless, overall, Canada has one of the best records in the G7 for creating jobs, namely one million net jobs since the height of the recession. Some 90% of those jobs are full time and over 80% are in the private sector.

* * *

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Toronto, our largest city, unemployment is higher than the national average, and the Conservatives are doing nothing.

In 2002, Liberals expanded the temporary foreign worker program to include low-skilled jobs such as fast food. Since then, the number of temporary foreign workers has grown at a staggering rate of 13% a year under both Liberals and Conservatives.

There are nearly 200,000 more temporary foreign workers a year under that minister. With 30,000 Canadians losing their jobs just last month, will the minister finally agree to a full audit of abuse in the temporary foreign worker program?

• (1425)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we did give Service Canada officers the power to do independent audits of employers, both those who are at a higher risk of potential abuse and on a random basis as well. Additional powers to crack down on abusive employers were implemented last December, including the new blacklist. We now have administrative monetary penalties that are proposed in the budget implementation act.

I am now referring any cases of misrepresentation under the Immigration Act by employers applying for LMOs to the CBSA for potential criminal enforcement.

[*Translation*]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the federal government's job bank site, a key component of the temporary foreign worker program, is not operating properly. Job ads are still posted months after the positions have been filled. Unemployed Canadians are unable to get a response from employers. That is the fault of the government, not the employers.

Will the Conservatives fix this disaster that they themselves created?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is wrong. The role of the job bank is to better connect the unemployed with available jobs in Canada. Thousands of employers use the job bank. The maximum period for posting a job is 30 days. Some provinces also link their own job banks to this site. The maximum period for posting a job is six months. We will soon make changes in order to better connect unemployed workers with employers.

[*English*]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it does not matter how many Canadians go on the site if the site does not work.

It was a few years ago that the Conservative government said employers had to advertise only on this site, so it is absolutely critical to its program. We know the site is so poorly maintained, so outdated, that job-seekers across the country are facing huge frustration.

What is the government doing to enforce the rules? What is it doing to make sure that employers actually follow up with Canadian job seekers?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like most of what that member says on this issue, he is wrong again. The government has never required employers to only advertise on that site. That would be ridiculous.

Oral Questions

The truth is that the site is a useful platform to connect unemployed Canadians with available jobs. The job alert service is now sending, collectively, hundreds of thousands of email alerts to unemployed Canadians, making them aware of available job postings. The typical maximum period for postings is 30 days. The absolute maximum is 60 days. Many of the provinces are participating in the Canada job bank site as well.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, dissension in the Conservative caucus continues to reign, and this time it is no less than the President of the Treasury Board, who two years ago wrote—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Markham—Unionville has the floor.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, two years ago, the President of the Treasury Board wrote to the then minister and complained that the job bank was not doing the job. The new minister says that he leaps into action whenever one of his colleagues complains. Why did he not leap into action two years ago, and if the answer is that he was not the minister then, will he leap twice as high today to fix this problem that—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister of Employment.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): I do not know what the question was, Mr. Speaker. All I know is that the member is becoming a bit of an embarrassment to himself with his inaccurate questions.

We have rules around the temporary foreign worker program. If employers cannot demonstrate that they have made a position available to a Canadian at the prevailing regional wage rate, they cannot invite someone in from abroad. That is what happened to a restaurant in the member for Markham—Unionville's riding. However, guess what? The restaurateur constituent called up the member and said "This is not fair". He wants to be able to bring someone in from abroad. The member is advocating that we lift the moratorium for his preferred restaurant, just like the leader of the Liberal Party did.

We will not—

● (1430)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Newton—North Delta.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, time and again the minister points to job vacancy numbers from the Canada job bank, data that is used to determine labour market opinions. However, that data is often old and postings are not removed when filled. In other words, decisions to permit temporary foreign workers are based on false information. Will the minister fix Canadian labour market data collection to ensure Canadians have first access to Canadian jobs?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the job bank is a useful platform to connect unemployed Canadians with available jobs. The typical maximum posting period is 30 days. We only extend it beyond that if employers ask for an extension, for up to six months maximum, after which the postings expire.

We are making improvements to the Canada job bank. We actually have several provinces for which provincial job banks are automatically posted on the Canada job bank. In those provinces that are not co-operating, we work with private sector web platforms as well. We will be using new technological developments in the near future to ensure an even better matching of unemployed Canadians with available jobs.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives took a broken program and made it even worse. The data used to determine whether a company can employ temporary foreign workers is unreliable. Some post ads in the job bank just to qualify for the program. The program needs to be fixed.

Will the minister agree to an independent review so we can stop using bad data, stop allowing abuses, and start giving Canadians confidence that this program will do what it was meant to do?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, we have already made very substantial changes, which have reduced the demand for the use of this program. We are on the cusp of another series of reforms. There are independent audits, conducted by Service Canada, under the new statutory authorities that we have given that agency.

However, I have letters from New Democratic MPs asking for us to streamline, simplify, and speed up the LMO process, asking us to lower the prevailing regional wage rate, asking us to make it easier for employers they prefer in their constituencies to use the program. With all due respect to those MPs, we are not going to listen to them.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the labour market situation is deteriorating, the Conservatives are flying blind. They have to deal with employment challenges without any reliable statistics. They are sending temporary foreign workers to regions where unemployment is high. They do not even know which industries or occupations are in demand.

Do the Conservatives realize that, by making cuts to labour market research, gutting Statistics Canada, and doing away with the mandatory long form census, they no longer have any benchmarks to indicate when it is reasonable for them to intervene in the labour market?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the member is mistaken. My department implemented approximately 60% of the recommendations set out in the report published by Mr. Drummond a few years ago on labour market information. We will continue to improve the availability of that information. We always want to ensure that Canadians are the first in line for jobs available in the Canadian economy. That is the goal of our program reforms.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General warned the government that Statistics Canada was unable to identify the labour needs within the provinces. Dominique Gross from Simon Fraser University also said that, with the existing data, it is impossible to know where labour shortages exist and which employers can legitimately hire temporary foreign workers. In short: bad data, bad decisions, bad government.

When will the Conservatives meaningfully tackle unemployment, starting with reliable labour market data?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, national labour market information is not relevant to the specific decisions made on the labour market opinions submitted by employers. We have made the analysis of these labour market opinions more stringent. We will make the process even more stringent with the reforms we will soon be announcing, to ensure that Canadians have the first crack at jobs available in the Canadian economy.

* * *

●(1435)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, stopping themselves from understanding a problem in order to find real solutions to it is what the Conservatives do best, especially on the issue of the missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Nothing in their policies allows us to understand why these women are missing or have been murdered. In fact, the list of victims is getting longer. This is why the UN special rapporteur has recommended that a public inquiry be held.

Can the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness tell us the reasons for these disappearances and murders?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note that the report very much acknowledges that while many challenges do remain, undoubtedly, the government has taken positive steps to improve the overall well-being and prosperity of aboriginal people in Canada.

With particular reference to the steps that the government has taken to support police action on these important files, we have created the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains, created a national persons website, improved law enforcement databases, made enhancements to the victims fund, and adopted the development of aboriginal community-based awareness initiatives and safety plans. The time for talk is over.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for 24 hours, a ceremony has been taking place on Parliament Hill, honouring the families of missing and murdered indigenous women. Today, UN rapporteur James Anaya issued a new report. He said the government should "...undertake a comprehensive, nationwide inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal woman and girls..."

Mr. Anaya joins a growing list of experts, at home, abroad, provinces and territories, indigenous organizations, and the victims'

families. They all agree that an inquiry is necessary. Why is the government failing to call a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not everyone agrees. In fact, I have looked at some of the recent reporting on this. Advocate Audrey Huntley, who is the co-founder of No More Silence, an organization that raises awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women, has been advocating on the issue since the 1990s. She very much believes that what is needed, again, is more support for police to investigate these matters, more direct action and intervention, more programming, more efforts to actually be on the ground, ensuring that the law enforcement measures being taken are getting desired results. That is exactly what our government is doing.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the government should be doing is calling an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

The UN report released today casts light on the failure of the government. In fact, the report says that indigenous women and girls remain vulnerable to abuse. The world is watching, and it is long past overdue. When will the Conservatives stop denying families and communities the truth and justice that they deserve?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years, there have been some 40 different reports, inquiries, and measures taken to identify issues. The reality is that more work needs to be done directly to get to the problem.

Let us look at the actual report, which says:

...Canada has taken determined action to address ongoing aspects of the history of misdealing and harm inflicted on aboriginal peoples in the country, a necessary step towards helping to remedy their current disadvantage.

The report goes on to talk about how Canada has in place numerous laws, policies, and programs. That is what we are continuing to do. That is real action.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with these types of answers, we will not be surprised with the next stats.

In April, the Department of Justice cut \$1.2 million, or 20%, from its research budget. Its internal report now shows that its research did not line up with the government's priorities. Then, eight researchers were fired.

It did the same as it has done with science; it cut the funding because it does not like the facts. What exactly were the facts that the government objected to so strongly?

Oral Questions

• (1440)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that the member, and seemingly her party, are very much opposed to any steps that bring about greater accountability and financial responsibility within the public service.

What we are doing and continuing to do at the Department of Justice, and throughout government, is to ensure that we bring value to hard-earned taxpayers' dollars for Canadians, to ensure we are getting the maximum efficiencies out of departments like mine and others.

Research is of course undertaken to obtain information to support priorities of government, measures of government that are actually getting results. That is what has happened in this case. That has happened across all government departments.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, he said greater accountability.

[*Translation*]

They have made cuts to Statistics Canada and Environment Canada. They have made cuts to the National Research Council and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. They have made cuts to CBC/Radio-Canada. Now, they are making cuts to the Department of Justice. The upshot of all these cuts is a reduction in the quality of information available, which has the effect of reducing the quality of the bills introduced by the government. The choices made by the Conservatives are ideological. There is a pattern of cuts to everything that involves facts and science.

Which research projects in the area of justice did not line up with the government's vision and priorities?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what seems to be ideological is this member's and her party's ideological disdain for anything that brings about savings for taxpayers and anything that brings about more accountability and efficiency in government departments, whether it is justice or across government.

We have made a determined decision to bring about greater accountability, greater value for dollars, greater respect for taxpayers' dollars. That is what we are doing in justice. That is what they are doing in defence. That is what they are doing in public safety. That is what Canadians want and demand and expect of government in the 21st century.

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EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are 156,000 Canadians who have been out of work for a year or longer. That number has more than doubled since 2008, when the number was 65,000. To make matters worse, the Conservatives are now giving four-year work permits for temporary foreign workers. Four years is not temporary. Unemployment for those 156,000 Canadians is not temporary.

Why did the Conservatives ramp up the TFW program, when so many Canadians face long-term unemployment?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yet again the Liberal Party is embarrassingly misinformed about this. In fact, the typical work permit in that program is issued for one or at most two years, but until we put in place the four-year maximum renewable period, temporary foreign workers could have their status to work in Canada renewed for as many years as possible. Under the Liberal management of the program, TFWs could be renewed for five, seven, or ten years.

We said if this is a temporary program, it must be temporary, so we put an absolute four-year maximum on the period of residency in Canada for these workers. It tightened the program over the Liberal rules.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to fix long-term unemployment, we need more jobs, not more temporary foreign workers.

In 2013, Canada's job growth stalled. To quote *The Economist* magazine, Canada's "post-crisis glow is fading". The workforce participation rate in Canada has hit a 13-year low, and our growth rate has fallen behind that of the U.S., the U.K., and Australia.

How far must our economy slide before the Conservatives realize, before the finance minister realizes, that his status quo is not working for Canadians?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on what matters most: jobs and economic growth. It is rather rich for the Liberals to be criticizing our government's record on job creation. They voted against every job creation measure our government has put forward, including freezing EI rates, which would provide certainty and flexibility for workers and employers; tax cuts for manufacturers; and \$70 billion in predictable and stable job-creating infrastructure.

The Liberal Party does not even have a plan for the economy and job growth.

* * *

• (1445)

PENSIONS

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is sad how Conservative indignation erupts whenever someone suggests that working-class Ontarians should get a little extra jingle in their pockets. Almost immediately, the Prime Minister attacked the Premier of Ontario for offering middle-class Ontarians real help to achieve retirement security.

Why does the Prime Minister believe that payroll deductions for artificial EI premiums are okay, when contributions for greater retirement security are not?

Oral Questions

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is fairly obvious that the Ontario government, the Ontario Liberals, are attacking the federal government to divert attention from their economic record.

Here is what our government has done: lowered taxes, provided opportunities for savings, created over one million jobs, and generated economic growth. In contrast, the Ontario government is going heavily into debt and raising taxes. Its misguided provincial pension plan would cost employees and employers \$3.5 billion a year.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to raise the ethical standards in Ottawa. Instead, he set up this Nixonian-style enemies list that has grown to include the independent officers of Parliament, the Supreme Court Chief Justice, and even Sheila Fraser. Now Justice John Gomery, who helped ferret out Liberal corruption, says he is appalled by the Prime Minister's behaviour toward the Supreme Court.

When will the Prime Minister stop with the vindictive attacks and start paying some respect to eminent Canadians like John Gomery?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was not only because of our respect for eminent Canadians but also because of respect for the integrity of the process that we went out and got opinions from former Supreme Court justices, like Mr. Justice Binnie and Madam Justice Charron, and also constitutional expert Peter Hogg. We reached out to Canadians, got that learned advice.

Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition has suggested, that somehow everybody knew that the process was established, somebody forgot to tell all those Federal Court judges who applied to be Supreme Court justices.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to disappoint Canadians and alienate those who went after the Liberals with their sponsorship scandal. This time, it is Justice Gomery who feels that the Prime Minister's attack on the Supreme Court and its Chief Justice is both bewildering and distasteful. In Justice Gomery's opinion, the Prime Minister's stubborn commitment to appointing Justice Nadon can be explained by the Conservatives' bias against judges from Quebec, who are seen as being too progressive.

When will the Prime Minister end his partisan and underhanded attacks on the Supreme Court and the institutions that oppose his kind of ideological governance?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): News flash, Mr. Speaker, this just in: Mr. Justice Nadon is from Quebec. Mr. Justice Nadon was even described by a colleague of my hon. friend, the justice critic for the NDP, as a great judge, as a brilliant legal mind.

I think there is agreement that Mr. Justice Nadon was a very eminent jurist. He was being considered for appointment. We acted

on advice from a parliamentary committee and advice we received from many sources, including in Quebec, and we moved forward on that advice.

* * *

[*Translation*]**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, seven months ago, the NDP applauded progress toward a trade agreement with Europe. At the time, the Minister of International Trade said that all of the major issues had been resolved. Seven months later, it is clear that that was not true, because seven months have passed and we still do not have the text of the agreement.

Can the minister tell us what is really going on with the Canada-EU agreement? In other words, what is the problem?

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member: patience. When we compare the current government's record on trade to the appalling record of the NDP, Canadians know who gets it right, who focuses on the priorities of Canadians.

Last October, the Prime Minister and President Barroso initialled and signed an agreement in principle for this trade agreement. We are finalizing the technical negotiations. They are almost complete.

This agreement is a great deal for Canada. It is going to increase bilateral trade by over 20%. It is also going to add \$12 billion to our national GDP. This is a great deal for Canada.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it would be a welcome change if the minister stopped hiding behind a smokescreen to hide his lack of explanation.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce said the government has been slow to diversify and has failed to properly increase exports. It is no wonder our export numbers are bad and getting worse.

European governments are consulting with the public, because that is the right thing to do in a democracy. The Conservatives are refusing to say what is on the negotiating table.

Why is the government scared of transparency? Why are Conservatives keeping Canadians in the dark?

● (1450)

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have news for that member. Canada actually has a trade surplus.

These negotiations with the European Union have been the most transparent and collaborative Canada has ever undertaken. They have included the provinces and territories at the table with us negotiating when it comes to areas under their jurisdiction. Municipalities across Canada have participated and have informed the process.

This is a great deal for Canada. It is a great deal for every sector of our economy and every region of our country.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Kashechewan First Nation has declared a state of emergency due to flooding on the Albany River. As of last night, there is an imminent risk of overbank flooding because of ice jams located upstream.

While dealing with local emergencies is primarily a matter of provincial responsibility, our government has always stood ready to help those in need. Would the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness please update this House on what our government is doing to help those in northern Ontario?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when major natural disasters strike, Canadians can count on our government to help them.

[*English*]

That is why we have committed three C-130 Hercules aircraft to evacuation efforts today. Should airfield conditions deteriorate as a result of weather, Chinook helicopters will be made available.

I would like to thank our Canadian Armed Forces, who are on the ground working to keep our hundreds of fellow Canadians safe and dry.

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HEALTH

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week frank conversations were held across the country as part of mental health week, but here in Ottawa, the Conservative government is failing to do its part. It has even refused to adopt the Mental Health Commission's national standard.

Anxiety, stress, and depression are on the rise in the public service, and Conservative mismanagement and attacks are making things worse, not better. As one of the nation's largest employers, why is the government failing to take concrete action on mental health in the workplace?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we have been working with public sector leaders to tackle this issue.

Currently 49% of all sick leave is attributable to mental health issues. The main issue, though, is that we have a sick leave system that is 50 years out of date and does not allow us to have the tools necessary to tackle these issues in a modern, effective manner.

That is the type of thing I want to see changed, and that is why I put in the shop window for our negotiations with the unions the sick leave system.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to mental health, the Conservatives cannot seem to walk the talk. When they encourage the private sector to comply with the Mental Health Commission of Canada's national standard, yet fail to apply that standard to the federal public service, that is pure hypocrisy.

Measures to prevent the kind of stress that can result in professional burnout or depression in the public service are absolutely inadequate. Mental health is essential. Why are the Conservatives not applying the national standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace to the federal public service?

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has invested significantly in mental health research and promotion. We have invested \$431 million in mental health research since 2006. We invest over \$112 million annually to support community-based health activities for families and invest in projects in over 230 communities across Canada.

It was this government that created the Mental Health Commission to develop a national strategy and to share best practices from coast to coast to coast.

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[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, in a dozen or so cities across the country, thousands of people took to the streets to say no to the cuts to Canada Post.

So far, 58 municipalities have already adopted a resolution or sent a letter in support of home mail delivery. The Conservatives are not thinking about the consequences of their decision for seniors or people with a disability. They are not thinking about what impact this will have on urban design or land use in an urban area. It has to be said that those big community mailboxes are not pretty; they are truly awful.

People like their letter carriers, and this public service is important to them. Will the Conservatives prevent us from having the sorry distinction of being the only OECD country that is incapable of providing home mail delivery?

• (1455)

[*English*]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2012, Canada Post delivered one billion fewer individually addressed lettermail pieces than it did in 2006. Only the NDP would stand in this House and say that there is no crisis at Canada Post, but Canadians are not buying that. In fact, two-thirds of Canadians currently do not receive door-to-door mail delivery.

We are concerned about Canada Post taking on its losses. If the member wants to talk about the design of where these community boxes go, I refer him to Canada Post, which is an independent crown corporation and makes those decisions on its own.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, independent? Conservatives have short arms and even shorter memories, or can they not recall their back-to-work law in 2011?

Oral Questions

The minister is simply pretending that there are no options, as if because times are changing, Canada Post cannot adapt and its services must be slashed.

There are so many examples around the world of governments that took the right decision regarding their public postal service: Italy, Germany, Japan, and New Zealand. They all adapted their postal service and can be proud of it.

Do Conservatives not have the ambition or creativity to lead by example and modernize Canada Post without crippling it?

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to be clear, Canada Post has a five-point plan to modernize the postal service. Obviously, we support that Canada Post do something about the bleeding on its balance sheet. It is posted, according to a Conference Board report, to lose up to \$1 billion a year by 2020, which is not that far away. This is because Canadians are choosing to communicate in very different ways than they did even a few years ago.

We certainly hope that Canada Post can get its balance sheet back under control and ensure that Canadians continue to have mail service.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today UN special rapporteur James Anaya reinforced the overwhelming consensus on the need for a national public inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. The RCMP has now identified almost 1,200 cases. This is not an aboriginal issue, it is not a women's issue, it is an ongoing Canadian tragedy.

Will the Prime Minister, who claims to be tough on crime, claims to stand up for victims, do the right thing and call a national public inquiry now?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the short answer is that, without calling a national inquiry, we are acting on recommendations that came from very learned, in-depth reports that we are already in possession of. We have taken substantial steps toward improving the ability of the police to investigate, arrest, and put in play the criminal justice process that will hold individuals accountable for these heinous crimes.

Those are the concrete actions and steps that we continue to make, along with the programs designed to help aboriginal women on reserve, including giving them matrimonial property, which the member and her party voted against. These are real concrete steps that make a difference in the lives of aboriginal women.

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*[Translation]***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this spring, four officials from the ministry of the interior of the Democratic Republic of Congo travelled to Canada at taxpayers' expense to interview approximately thirty Congolese nationals threatened with deportation by the government. Ironically, one of

these nationals was himself an official from Kinshasa and as such, is suspected of being involved in human rights abuses.

The Congolese Canadian community is concerned about this state of affairs and is asking to meet with the minister responsible.

My question is simple: Will the community get that meeting?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As the hon. member knows, the Canada Border Services Agency is responsible for upholding the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and for ensuring the integrity of our borders. As he also knows, each year approximately 250,000 newcomers arrive in Canada. In cases where these individuals, once they are here, fail to respect our laws and have exhausted every possible recourse, the CBSA then has a duty to remove them to their country of origin.

* * *

*[English]***INFRASTRUCTURE**

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Toronto is a world-class city. It is a major engine that drives our national economy. However, two decades now of downloading and cuts by Liberals and Conservatives have left the city of Toronto with crumbling infrastructure and crippling gridlock. Now Conservative mismanagement is putting thousands of infrastructure projects at risk right across the country. Cities are still not clear even how to apply.

Why is the minister putting our construction season at risk with all these needless delays?

● (1500)

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this information is completely false. With the new Building Canada plan, just as the previous one, the provinces prioritize the projects. All of the information required to apply is available online already. The process does not deviate from the previous program that municipalities across Canada know and have used over the past seven years. It is exactly the same.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well that the Building Canada fund has been plagued by long delays, and now he is changing the rules again.

Oral Questions

Conservative mismanagement and shifting goal posts are putting thousands of infrastructure projects at risk. Since 1993, federal government inaction has created a \$170-billion infrastructure deficit, and the people of Toronto are tired of this. It is at best neglect, but looks like the hostility of successive federal governments towards our urban centres.

Why can the minister not get badly needed funds out the door and help build our cities?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is wrong. We have specifically allocated nearly \$11 billion under the new Building Canada plan for job-creating infrastructure in Ontario. We will continue to support the provinces and municipalities. However, the provinces make their own priorities.

If it is so serious for the member, I invite him to support this and to vote for it for once.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday parliamentarians will join with Holocaust survivors and their families in Ottawa for the annual National Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremonies presented by the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem.

On this occasion, we remember, of course, and commemorate the horrors of the Holocaust, the six million Jews who were so brutally murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. In 2009, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity proposed an act to establish a national Holocaust monument, which passed unanimously in the House.

Would the Minister of State for Multiculturalism please provide the House with an update on the progress of a national Holocaust monument?

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I was honoured to join with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages to help announce the winning design for the national Holocaust monument, which will be unveiled in the fall of 2015. Congratulations to the design-winning team led by Gail Dexter-Lord, creators of Landscape of Loss, Memory and Survival.

The national Holocaust monument will serve as a constant reminder to reflect on the millions of lives lost due to hate and intolerance, and to educate our children so that such atrocities should never happen again.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I rise to talk about a grave situation that is becoming worse off the northeast coast of Newfoundland for crab fishermen. Already the Conservatives have cut the inshore shrimp fishery, favouring big business in the offshore. Also, they are affecting seasonal workers with changes to employment insurance. Now, heavy ice is preventing fishermen from doing their job.

Harvesters, crew members, and hundreds of plant workers have not seen a paycheque since the middle of last month.

Will the minister today commit to an ice compensation package?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is true that in some areas of Atlantic Canada, some fisheries have been delayed, although only minimally in most cases due to weather and heavy ice conditions. DFO is working closely with industry to monitor the ice and weather conditions, which, as the member knows, are unpredictable at this time of year and can change quickly.

With respect to compensation in the past, several years ago it was only offered when, with very extreme conditions, a fishery was delayed into in late spring or even into the summer. The minister and her officials will continue to monitor the situation.

* * *

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Laval city council has unanimously adopted a motion calling for sporting, cultural, and recreational infrastructure projects to be eligible for funding under the Building Canada fund. Infrastructure projects of this nature are important to youth sport development and the cultural growth of our municipalities.

The Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs displayed some creativity when it came time to finance the ice oval in Quebec City. Will he also heed the request of the City of Laval and provide funding for these infrastructure projects under the Building Canada fund?

●(1505)

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have said before, we do not invest in professional sport infrastructure of any kind. That is clear.

There was some money left over from the old program. The former Government of Quebec had identified the ice oval as a priority in a budget. Priorities are always set by the province. We merely followed the province's lead. Under the new Building Canada plan, sporting, recreational, and cultural infrastructure projects continue to be eligible for funding, but financial support will now be provided under the gas tax fund. It is up to the City of Laval to make choices and do the work.

Oral Questions

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 9, Canadians in communities across our country attended ceremonies and parades to mark the National Day of Honour. I was honoured to attend the event at Edmonton Garrison, with 2,200 members of 3rd Canadian Division on parade. This was an occasion for all Canadians to remember our brave men and women who served and those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Will the Minister of Veterans Affairs please update the House on how Canadians shared this important date in our history?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report to the House that the National Day of Honour events took place in community centres, schools, municipal offices, provincial legislatures, and Legion branches right across our country. On Friday, Canadians from coast to coast to coast stood united with their neighbours, families, and friends to pay respect to those who served in Afghanistan and to the families who have sacrificed so much.

We honour and remember the deeds and sacrifices of Canadian veterans. Lest we forget.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, recently first nations in Ontario learned that the national child benefit reinvestment program has been slashed by 50%. Yes, that is 50%. This benefit helps support child care initiatives and food banks and was used to combat poverty. Now communities are scrambling to make up the shortfall, programs are at risk, and the job prospects of first nations parents across Ontario are looking worse.

Why are Conservatives cutting this crucial funding, and what is their plan to help first nations communities with the shortfall?

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will take a look at the file and get back to the member. I am unaware of those details at this time, but I will get back to her as soon as possible.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government imposed a moratorium on foreign workers at the start of the summer season, and this moratorium will hurt the tourism industry in Quebec's national capital and many other regions of Quebec.

It is unfair that restaurant and business owners in Quebec are being punished for abuse committed in Ontario and British Columbia. Quebec's new immigration minister is concerned about the situation and has formally requested that Quebec be exempted from the moratorium.

Will the employment and immigration ministers do their homework? Will they see that Quebec has already strictly controlled requests for foreign workers? Will they exempt Quebec from the moratorium?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we imposed a moratorium on the food and restaurant industries until our reforms are finalized in a few weeks.

I want to point out to the member that Quebec has a youth unemployment rate of 14%. The unemployment rate for new immigrants to Quebec is over 20%. Employers should be able to find young unemployed Quebecers and new Quebecers to work. These people should be hired first.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I may not be the Amazing Kreskin, but it is getting all too predictable what we are going to hear in Conservative talking points on climate.

I want to be really clear about this. I have been asking repeatedly whether the current administration remains committed to the target it picked and the Prime Minister signed on to in 2009 in Copenhagen. Environment Canada data make it clear we will not hit that target. According to *Maclean's* magazine on April 9, this minister and the Prime Minister remain committed to the target.

Are they committed? Is there going to be a plan? When will we see it?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2006, our government has invested significant funds in more efficient technology, better infrastructure and adaptation, and clean energy. We have taken actions on two of the largest sources of emissions in this country, including the transportation and electricity sectors. In fact, in the first 21 years of coal regulations, we expect to see accumulative reductions in greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing 2.6 million vehicles from the road.

* * *

● (1510)

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, the temporary foreign workers program is being abused left, centre, and mostly right, meaning lower wages and less work for Canadian—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Routine Proceedings

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North has the floor. I will ask members to come to order.

The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, the minister has even been recruiting young people abroad for the International Experience Canada work program, although our own young people, including in Thunder Bay—Superior North, have double the national unemployment rate. Can the minister assure the people of northern Ontario that temporary foreign workers will not take away their jobs in the Ring of Fire?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, that is precisely why we are undertaking yet another reform of the program to ensure that Canadians always get the first crack at available jobs, particularly young Canadians.

However, I have to point out that I get all these letters from opposition MPs asking for special exceptions and favours and to liberalize the program. I have one question from a Bloc MP saying to end the moratorium. I have the NDP asking for us to expand it. What we need is a balanced approach, one that ensures legitimate labour mobility and that this country will remain open to the talents of newcomers, but that as much as is reasonably possible, Canadians come first in the labour market.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the employment minister might have inadvertently misled the House in questioning my contention about employers only required to advertise on the government website.

Therefore, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to table a government press release of 2006, in both official languages, which makes the point extremely clearly. It states, “Employers will only need to advertise on the—

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table—

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(b) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 44 petitions.

JUSTICE FOR ANIMALS IN SERVICE ACT (QUANTO'S LAW)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-35, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals).

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

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas respecting its participation in the 33rd annual meeting of the board of directors in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from March 19 to 21.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly respecting its participation at the fall meeting of the OSC Parliamentary Assembly held in Budva, Montenegro, from October 13 to 15, 2013.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, entitled “The Entertainment Software Industry in Canada”.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The committee advises that pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2) the subcommittee on private members' business met to consider the items added to the order of precedence as a result of the replenishment of Wednesday, April 9, 2014, and recommended that the items listed herein, which it has determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

• (1515)

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the report is deemed adopted.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, entitled “Economics of Policing”. I might add that municipalities across this country have been eagerly waiting for this report, so I am pleased today to do that. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive report in response to this report.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in relation to a study on the main estimates 2014-15.

* * *

PETITIONS

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across Canada more and more Canadians are calling for a change to our broken first-past-the-post electoral system, and Guelph is no exception.

I rise to present the signatures of a great many of my constituents who call upon the House of Commons to immediately undertake pan-Canadian consultations that would amend the Canada Elections Act and introduce a suitable form of proportional representation, one that would ensure that votes cast would be an effective means to ensure fair representation in Parliament, where the share of seats held by each party would better reflect the popular vote and would prevent 25% majority governments.

We eagerly await the government's response.

GASOLINE PRICES

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition today in support of my Bill C-336.

With the long weekend just around the corner, motorists, small business owners, and industry are again worried about the very high gas prices that are causing real hardship. The federal government is doing nothing to help ordinary working families that are getting hosed at the pumps.

As a result, the petitioners encourage the government to pass my Bill C-336, an act to establish the office of the oil and gas ombudsman to investigate complaints relating to the business practices of suppliers of oil or gas, which would provide strong and effective consumer protection to ensure no big business could swindle, cheat, or rip off hard-working Canadians.

CANADA POST

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I rise today to table a petition regarding the devastating cuts to service and the huge price increases at Canada Post. I am pleased to table this petition on behalf of hundreds of Canadians.

I look forward to the government's response.

Routine Proceedings

SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by thousands of Canadians.

The petitioners draw to the attention of the government that Canadian consumers want to support sustainable seafood options and that Canadian seafood industries are providing increased opportunities for consumers to make sustainable seafood purchases.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to designate March 18 as national sustainable seafood day.

BLOOD AND ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to table a petition calling upon the Government of Canada to change its policy on blood and organ donation. More specifically, the signatories are requesting that sexual orientation be removed as a screening criteria.

Therefore, the signatories request that the Government of Canada return the rights of any healthy Canadian to give the gift of blood, bone marrow and organs to those in need no matter the race, religion or sexual preference of a person. The right to give blood or donate organs is universal to any healthy man or woman.

CANADA POST

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions to present today.

The first petition calls upon the Government of Canada to take the necessary legislative and regulatory steps to immediately reverse the devastating increase in postal rates and the cancellation of door-to-door delivery.

The petitioners call upon Canada Post to ensure that it continues with five-day delivery.

● (1520)

HOME CHILDREN

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls upon Parliament to offer an unequivocal, sincere and public apology to the home children child migrants who died while being ashamed of their history and deprived of their families, to the living and elderly home children migrants who continue to bear the weight of the past, and to the descendants of home children.

The petitioners call upon the government for an unequivocal apology.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition I wish to present calls upon the government to change the Criminal Code to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

Having read and agreed with the accompanying information sheet, I present these petitions to the Government of Canada.

Routine Proceedings

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House, signed by Albertans.

The first petition calls upon parliamentarians to stand up for Canadian democracy, reject Bill C-23, and bring forward genuine electoral reform that would stop fraud and would ensure every Canadian could exercise the right to vote.

CANADA POST

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls upon the government to stop the cuts to postal service, stop the high price for stamps, and restore the 8,000 jobs it intends to cut.

DEMENTIA

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions that I would like to present today.

The first petition supports Bill C-356, an act respecting a national strategy for dementia, put forward by my colleague from Nickel Belt, with the ultimate goal of the government being able to make recommendations on ways to support and strengthen Canada's capacity to care for persons with dementia.

Most of the signatories are from the greater Toronto area.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is a series of petitions, all together, from Canadians across the country, most on the west coast and the prairies.

The petitioners object to Bill C-23, the so-called fair elections act. They ask that this Parliament not pass the bill and that we start over again with a bill that ultimately would be fair.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on May 1, the Council of Canadian Academies tabled a report on shale gas and hydraulic fracturing. The study showed that nothing is known about this practice. We are putting the cart before the horse. We do not know what effect fracking could have on our health or the environment.

Several hundred people have signed petitions urging the Government of Canada to take on the important role of publicly disclosing all of the chemicals used during the fracking process. In addition, they are calling on Health Canada and Environment Canada to do their job and ensure that the protection of human health and biodiversity is taken into account.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to table two petitions. The first petition is signed by Quebeckers who are calling on the House of Commons to pass a bill requiring that all genetically modified products and ingredients be labelled as GMOs. It is a reasonable measure, one that is supported by the Green Party.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls for a tanker ban. We have had a moratorium, a complete ban, on oil tankers on the British Columbia coast since 1972. It has been observed and honoured by every provincial and federal government since 1982.

The petitioners from Delta and from a number of locations in Ontario and Vancouver are calling on Parliament to make sure that the tanker ban remains in place.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table two petitions today. The first one is with respect to the Algoma Central Railway line and the fact that the government had removed the subsidy to this very important line without consultation with the stakeholders on the impact that this would have on businesses, homes, tourism, and communities.

The petitioners are asking for the federal government to reinstate the funding. I must say that the government did come through and put temporary funding back for one more year, but the petitioners remain concerned. These petitioners are from Wawa, Chapleau, and Sault Ste. Marie.

CANADA POST

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with respect to the cuts to Canada Post services. The petitioners are concerned about the loss of jobs, the loss of services, the increase in fees, and the decrease in services. They are calling upon the Government of Canada to reverse the cuts.

The petitioners are from Kapuskasing, Val Rita, Moonbeam, and Petawawa.

• (1525)

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, residents in my riding continue to sign petitions protesting the loss of home mail delivery by Canada Post. They are calling upon the Government of Canada to reject Canada Post's plan for reduced services and to explore other options to update Canada Post's business plan.

DEMENTIA

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from petitioners drawing to the attention of the Minister of Health and the House of Commons the fact that the federal government needs a national strategy for dementia and health care for persons afflicted with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia-related diseases.

CANADA POST

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a petition from the newly amalgamated community of Fogo Island and the former community of Seldom. They are talking about Canada Post's service, and they are calling for the Canada Post Corporation's proposed downgrade of services to be reversed.

The petitioners want a full service from Canada Post, and they are calling on the government to help maintain this service to this smaller community.

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from dozens of people from Thunder Bay who remain concerned that the Experimental Lakes Area, while it has its temporary reprieve, still needs support for the scientists and the staff and the important work that they do and should continue to do in whole ecosystem research on lakes and rivers.

[Translation]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition from people in Quebec City who are concerned about the practices of mining companies. They feel that the checks and balances currently in place are insufficient. They are calling for the creation of a legal ombudsman mechanism for responsible mining.

* * *

[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, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 347 to 351, 354, 358 to 360, 365, 370, 373, 376, 377, 379, 384, 386, 387, 394, 401, 408, and 417.

[Text]

Question No. 347—**Hon. John McKay:**

With regard to the Prime Minister's "24 Seven" videos: (a) what are the total costs of creating, producing, and hosting these videos, broken down by (i) individual video, (ii) department, (iii) program activity, (iv) sub-program activity, (v) labour cost; and (b) who is responsible for creating, producing, and hosting these videos?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), no costing breakdown is available. The Privy Council Office, PCO, manages the Prime Minister's website, the content of which is owned by the Prime Minister's Office. All aspects of video production are the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office. PCO Communications and Consultations provide web publishing and maintenance support for the PM's website as well as advice on content, using existing resources.

These activities fall under:

"1.1 Program: Advice and support to the Prime Minister and portfolio ministers" and "1.1.5 Sub-Program: Offices of the Prime Minister and portfolio ministers".

With regard to part (b), all aspects of video production are the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office. PCO Communications and Consultations provide web publishing and maintenance support for the PM's website as well as advice on content. The information and technical services division is responsible for the servers that host www.pm.gc.ca.

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 348—**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to termination of employment agreements of exempt staff in ministers' offices since December 13, 2011: (a) how many employees in each minister's office have been terminated for misconduct or incompetence; (b) in aggregate, what was the total sum of severance paid out to these employees; (c) what was the average, median and highest amount of severance paid to a single terminated employee; (d) how many employees resigned but still received severance pay; and (e) out of the subset of employees who resigned but still received severance pay, what was the average, median and maximum termination settlement?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, between December 13, 2011, and March 2014, fewer than five individuals working as ministers' exempt staff were terminated for misconduct or incompetence. Providing the amounts requested in (b) and (c) would result in a disclosure of personal information not authorized under the Privacy Act. Therefore, these figures are not being provided.

Between December 2011 and March 2014, 140 individuals working as ministers' exempt staff resigned and received severance pay. The average severance payment for this group was \$22,510 and the median severance payment was \$13,680. The maximum severance payment cannot be provided as it would result in the disclosure of personal information. The member will note that severance payments are not discretionary. They are governed by the Treasury Board policies for ministers' offices.

Question No. 349—**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to advertising by the government during the broadcast of Super Bowl XLVIII on February 2, 2014: (a) what was the total cost for advertising; and (b) what was the cost of each advertisement shown?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada purchased airtime during the broadcast of Super Bowl XLVIII on February 2, 2014, for Public Safety Canada's cyberbullying Campaign.

Public Safety Canada purchased two 30-second spots on the CTV national network and one 30-second spot on the RDS network.

The Government of Canada does not disclose information about the specific amounts paid for individual ad placements or the amounts paid to specific media outlets. In processing Parliamentary returns, the Government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and some information has been withheld on the grounds that the information is considered third party business sensitive.

Question No. 350—**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to the Prime Minister's "24 Seven" videos: (a) when was the "24 Seven" project conceived; (b) is any of the content of the videos licensed from external providers, and if so, what are the costs of such licensing; (c) what are the file or reference numbers of all files and contracts associated with the conception and production of the videos; and (d) what are the job titles of all government employees involved in the conception and production of the videos?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Prime Minister's "24 Seven" videos, with regard to (a), the PCO was first advised of the project in November 2013, and the first video was published on January 6, 2014.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (b), the PCO manages the Prime Minister's website, the content of which is owned by the Prime Minister's Office. All aspects of video production are the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office.

With regard to (c), the PCO does not have any contracts associated with the conception and production of the videos.

With regard to (d), PCO Communications and Consultations manages the Prime Minister's website, the content of which is owned by the Prime Minister's Office. All aspects of video production, including conception, are the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office.

Question No. 351—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to the sponsorship of parents and grandparents in the family class category: (a) on what date did the government receive the 5,000th application of 2014; and (b) how many applications has the government returned to applicants since that date?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the 5000th application for sponsorship of parents and grandparents was received January 21, 2014. The Citizenship and Immigration Canada, CIC, website has been updated to advise applicants that the cap has been reached. Members may go to <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/sponsor-parents.asp> for details.

With regard to (b), CIC is preparing to return the applications received after the cap was reached. As of March 28, 2014, it is estimated that 2,579 applications will be returned.

Question No. 354—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to the Canada Job Grant agreements-in-principle reached with several provinces and territories, what is the file number for each agreement?

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Canada job fund agreements, which include the Canada job grant, there are no file numbers associated with the agreement in principle reached with provinces and territories.

Question No. 358—Hon. John McCallum:

With regard to the use of the government aircrafts operated by departments and agencies under the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness since April 1, 2011, and for each use of the aircraft: (a) what are the names and titles of the passengers present on the flight manifest; (b) what were all the departure and arrival points of the aircraft; (c) who requested access to the fleet; and (d) who authorized the flight?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness does not own any government aircraft. The CBSA does not own any government aircraft.

For reasons of national security, CSIS does not disclose details related to its capital assets. It should be noted that CSIS, like other government departments and agencies, is subject to the scrutiny of the Auditor General. Correctional Service of Canada does not own any government aircraft.

The Parole Board of Canada does not own any government aircraft.

The RCMP's electronic filing system does not capture these specific details, and as a result, the information requested cannot be obtained without a manual review of related files. Therefore, given the current time constraints, the RCMP is unable to provide the requested information, as it would take an excessive amount of resources and time.

Question No. 359—Hon. John McCallum:

With regard to processing times for visa and immigration applications, broken down by year and using 80% of applications completed as a benchmark, what is the average wait time and success rate, including the total number of applications received and approved for each processing centre in calendar years 2005-2013, for: (a) Family Class, specifically (i) spouses and partners, (ii) children and dependents, (iii) parents and grandparents; (b) Permanent Economic Residents, specifically, (i) federal skilled workers, (ii) Quebec skilled workers, (iii) the provincial nominee program, broken down by province, (iv) live-in caregivers, (v) Canadian experience class, (vi) federal business immigrants, (vii) Quebec business immigrants; (c) Temporary Economic Residents, specifically (i) International Students, (ii) Temporary Foreign Workers; and (d) Temporary Resident Visas, specifically (i) Temporary Resident Visa, (ii) Work Visa, (iii) ten-year Super Visa?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, producing the voluminous information requested in the question and sub-questions would require an extensive manual search of Citizenship and Immigration Canada records and an excessive number of taxpayer-funded man-hours. After a lengthy data extraction process involving millions of files, the report would have to be reviewed in its entirety to ensure that the data were accurate and valid. Providing the full and accurate information requested in the question and sub-questions is therefore not feasible within the prescribed timeline for the reasons outlined above.

Question No. 360—Hon. John McCallum:

With regard to the use of government-owned aircrafts operated by Transport Canada since April 1, 2011, and for each use of the aircraft: (a) what are the names and titles of the passengers present on the flight manifest; (b) what were all the departure and arrival points of the aircraft; (c) who requested access to the fleet; and (d) who authorized the flight?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the information requested cannot be compiled within the allotted time. Paper copies of flight manifests are retained for six months after a flight. Information from each manifest would need to be transcribed individually at each of the six bases across the country. Information more than six months old is not available.

Question No. 365—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With regard to government appointments: what is the name of each person receiving an Order-in-Council Appointment since January 1, 2006, and for each such appointment, what is (i) the position to which they were appointed, (ii) the location or region of the appointment, if applicable, (iii) the term of the appointment, (iv) the remuneration or compensation of the appointment?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the response from the Privy Council Office is publicly available on the Privy Council Office's orders in council website at <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/oic-ddc.asp>.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 370—Mr. Scott Andrews:**

With regard to projects approved for funding in Atlantic Canada by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA): for fiscal years 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014, broken down by province of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, for each project, what is (i) the name of the proponent, (ii) the title, (iii) the total cost, (iv) the amount of funding approved by ACOA, (v) the name of the ACOA program through which funding was approved?

Hon. Rob Moore (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), CPC): Mr. Speaker, insofar as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is concerned, with regard to projects approved for funding in Atlantic Canada for fiscal years 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013 14, broken down by each of the four Atlantic provinces, the information can be found on the agency's website at <http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/eng/Accountability/AccessToInformation/Pages/home.aspx>.

Question No. 373—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to Corporations Canada: (a) when did Corporations Canada begin charging a fee for a full corporate profile of a federal corporation; (b) what is the schedule of fees; (c) under what authority is the schedule of fees set forth; (d) what is the anticipated revenue for fiscal years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 from the payment of these fees; (e) has any analysis been undertaken in respect of the consistency of Corporations Canada's search and fee policies with Canada's Action Plan on Open Government; (f) if the answer to (e) is negative, will such an analysis be undertaken; and (g) if the answer to (e) is affirmative, what are the titles, dates, and file numbers of any reports, memoranda, files or any other documents related to this analysis?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Corporations Canada is continuously looking to improve the availability of products and services and of its online offerings. While the online corporations database is still available for free, the corporate profile is a new product that was introduced on January 30, 2014. It provides online and 24/7 access to the director addresses. Fees for the corporate profile comply with regulations under the Corporate Acts that are administered by Corporations Canada.

With regard to (b), the Corporations Canada database is still available for free for those who sign up to become secure users. For those who are not secure users, Corporations Canada operates on a cost-recovery basis, meaning its activities are funded by those who use its services.

With regard to (c), the fees are set under the authority of the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and the Canada Cooperatives Act. The fee was established in 1975 by schedule 5 of the Canada Business Corporations Regulations, in 2011 by the schedule of the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Regulations in 2011, and in 1999 by schedule 3 of the Canada Cooperative Regulations in 1999.

With regard to (d), for 2013-14, the revenue is approximately \$24,000. For 2014-15, the anticipated revenue is \$144,000, based on the 2013-14 figures.

With regard to (e), with regard to the Action Plan on Open Government, Corporations Canada recognized the interest of having its dataset of federal corporations on the open data portal. The secure log-in approach used by Corporations Canada leverages industry investment to provide a client-centric and secure online authentication in a manner that respects privacy.

With regard to (f), no analysis is necessary because the search and fee policy is a separate issue from Canada's Action Plan on Open Government.

Part (g) is not applicable.

Question No. 376—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to the Royal Canadian Mint: (a) has any assessment been carried out on the fiscal impact, on an annual basis, of eliminating the five-cent coin from circulation in Canada; and (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, (i) what is the file or reference number of any document containing or bearing on this assessment, (ii) what was the estimated fiscal impact?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no assessments have been carried out on the fiscal impact, on an annual basis, of eliminating the five-cent coin from circulation in Canada.

Question No. 377—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With regard to Budget 2014: what is the total number of hours paid for by the government, in employee or contracted services, in the preparation of the Budget and what is the cost associated with those hours of work?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the preparation of the budget is at the core of the Department of Finance's mandate and is a year-long process. As such, the department does not track the hours of work nor the cost associated with this work.

The costs of contracted services, not itemized by hours of work, first for the printing and then for the editing and translation of economic action plan 2014 were \$232,862.63 and \$98,911.85 respectively.

Other departments are involved in the preparation of the budget, but neither the hours nor the cost is reported in this response.

Question No. 379—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With regard to the closure of Kingston Penitentiary: (a) on what date was the decision made to close the penitentiary; (b) what capital upgrades or repairs, if any, were underway at the time the decision to close the facility was made; (c) what capital upgrades or repairs, if any, began after the decision to close the facility was made; and (d) what were the costs of any initiatives identified in either (b) or (c)?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the decision to close Kingston Penitentiary was made on March 29, 2012.

With regard to (b), in fiscal year 2011-2012, the following capital upgrade projects were under way at the time of the decision: work to provide separations within the existing recreation yard: \$1,609,344; new central heating plant in Building C4, preliminary assessment, \$105,984; work to modernize door control, fixed-point alarms, and emergency cell call systems, \$93,311; and installation of a drug detection cell, \$90,045. There were no capital repair projects under way at the time of the decision.

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With regard to (c), no capital upgrade projects were begun after the decision to close the facility was made. One capital repair project for boiler and steam generator work began after the decision. Given that CSC did not proceed with the new central heating plant project mentioned in part (b) and that no further work than the assessment was completed after the decision to close, minor work was required to replace key components in the existing heating plant to ensure minimal heat is provided in the facility.

With regard to (d), the total cost of capital upgrade projects under way at the time of the decision was \$1,898,684. It should be noted that this amount includes total project costs, incurred in fiscal years 2011-12 and 2012-13. The total cost for capital repair work for the boiler and steam generator that commenced after the decision was \$21,514.

Question No. 384—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to the backgrounder on upgrades to the CP-140 Aurora posted on the Department of National Defense website on March 19, 2014: (a) what studies or other documents support the claim made in the backgrounder that “The modernized Aurora aircraft will offer superior capabilities to alternative aircraft, making it one of the best Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance aircrafts available through until 2030”; and (b) what are the (i) dates, (ii) file numbers, (iii) conclusions of these reports or other documents?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force confirms that recent performance within military maritime air exercises has indicated that the modernized Aurora is today capable of outperforming alternative aircraft, making it one of the best intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft available through until 2030.

Question No. 386—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to the recent sale of crown land owned by Correctional Service of Canada, in the amount of 1,554.48 square meters, located on Frontenac Institute in Kingston, Ontario: (a) who is the purchaser; (b) what is the purchase price; (c) what is the closing date of the transaction; (d) what were all of the measures taken to respect the Commissioner’s Directive for Real Property for Correctional Service Canada, in particular the statement, under Principles, that “acquisition and disposal of real property assets will be done in a fair and open manner, which shall include public consultation”; (e) what was the first date of any communications regarding the sale of this land between the government and the purchaser; (f) what was the first date of any communications regarding the sale of this land between the government and parties who expressed interest but ultimately did not purchase the land; and (g) what was the first date of any communications regarding the sale of this land between the government and parties other than those in (e) and (f)?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the purchaser is the Royal Kingston Curling Club.

With regard to (b), the purchase price was \$18,500.00.

With regard to (c), the closing date of the transaction was October 31, 2013.

With regard to (d), CSC’s Commissioner Directive 300—Real Property was adhered to and a public notice of intent of sale of a portion of crown land was issued on February 9, 2013. Furthermore, CSC officials worked with the Treasury Board Secretariat, TBS, to ensure accuracy in its interpretation of TBS policy and the Federal Real Property and Federal Immovables Act.

With regard to (e), the first date of communication was November 22, 2009.

With regard to (f), the first date of communication was February 9, 2013.

With regard to (g), no other communications transpired.

Question No. 387—Ms. Megan Leslie:

With regard to the comments made March 7, 2014 by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration at the Canadian Club of Toronto concerning the right to vote of Canadians living abroad: what is the government’s position on the voting rights in Canadian elections of Canadians who have lived abroad for longer than 5 years?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government’s position on the voting rights in Canadian elections of Canadians who have lived abroad for longer than five years can be found in the Canada Elections Act, Part 11, Special Voting Rules, which states:

222. (1) The Chief Electoral Officer shall maintain a register of electors who are temporarily resident outside Canada in which is entered the name, date of birth, civic and mailing addresses, sex and electoral district of each elector who has filed an application for registration and special ballot and who: (a) at any time before making the application, resided in Canada; (b) has been residing outside Canada for less than five consecutive years immediately before making the application; and (c) intends to return to Canada to resume residence in the future.

222. (2) Paragraph (1)(b) does not apply to an elector who is (a) employed outside Canada in the federal public administration or the public service of a province; (b) employed outside Canada by an international organization of which Canada is a member and to which Canada contributes; (c) a person who lives with an elector referred to in paragraph (a) or (b); or (d) a person who lives with a member of the Canadian Forces or with a person referred to in paragraph 191(d).

Question No. 394—Ms. Libby Davies:

With regard to the February 2014 Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) Management Response to the recommendations of the Final Report of the Task Force on Ethics Reform, approved by the Governing Council of the CIHR: (a) precisely what information was gathered through the “international environmental scan”; and (b) what specific recommendations, in support of the recent appointment of Dr. Jane Aubin as the “Ethics Champion,” and Dr. Paul Garfinkel as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Ethics, were given to CIHR Management and CIHR Governing Council by each of (i) the CIHR Science Council, (ii) the CIHR Standing Committee on Ethics, (iii) the CIHR Institute Advisory Board Ethics Designates?

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Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an international scan of selected health research funders was conducted to identify ethics-related governance structures and other features that would inform a renewed approach to delivering on CIHR's ethics mandate. A small number of international health research funders were selected for their comparability with CIHR as a research funding arm of government. The selected funders were: the Medical Research Council, United Kingdom; the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia; the National Institutes of Health, United States of America; and the European Commission, European Union. The organizations were contacted by email to confirm that the information gathered was up to date. This scan was provided in briefing materials for the February 28-29, 2014, meeting of the CIHR's governing council.

The scan indicated that in terms of overall mandate and structures, the selected health research funders and CIHR share similarities and differences. With respect to ethics-related features, the scan indicated that a commitment to ethics is evident in these health research funders through a range of governance structures and other features. The main conclusions drawn from this international scan are that: several models are used for incorporating ethics at the core of research funding organizations; ethics leadership is found at the highest levels of organizations, but executives do not tend to be ethics experts; and committees and chairs of committees have ethics expertise to provide high quality advice.

It is important to note that the federal research agencies, namely CIHR, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, have joined their efforts over the last ten years to promote high ethical standards of conduct in research in Canada. These efforts have resulted in the development of the tri-council policy on ethical conduct of research involving humans and in the creation of a panel of research ethics responsible for addressing the evolving needs of the three agencies in promoting the ethics of research involving humans. This panel is composed of experts and is supported by a permanent secretariat of eight staff. In addition, in 2011, CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC jointly created the panel on responsible conduct of research as part of a collaborative objective to ensure a coherent and uniform approach for promoting responsible conduct in research.

With regard to the recommendations, in 2013-14, CIHR's governing council discussed on several occasions the advice and recommendations of the task force on ethics. In 2013, the council directed CIHR management, including CIHR's science council, to develop an ethics action plan for addressing the issues raised by the task force through an approach that would address both leadership issues and issues of integration of ethics at the core of CIHR's business.

All CIHR's institute advisory board ethics designates had the opportunity to comment on the ethics action plan and to address ethics issues at the IAB's meetings. The CIHR scientific directors, who receive advice from their IAB, as heads of institutes, reported to CIHR's science council, as the accountable body, on IAB's recommendations. In October 2013, the science council ethics action plan developed by CIHR's management was unanimously endorsed by the science council for recommendation to the

governing council for approval. This action plan identified the chief scientific officer/vice president research, knowledge translation as CIHR's champion of the CIHR ethics function.

The CIHR standing committee on ethics, a committee created and mandated by CIHR's governing council to identify ethical issues of strategic relevance with respect to health and health research, has been consulted on the ethics action plan and the co-chair of the CIHR standing committee on ethics actively participated in the discussion that took place at a governing council meeting on this matter. CIHR's governing council is the accountable structure, as determined by the CIHR Act, for developing CIHR's strategic directions, goals, and policies, including as they relate to ethics issues.

Considering that ethics is inherent to health research excellence, CIHR is fully committed to strengthening the culture of ethics in research, including scientific integrity, in all of its programs. This is why CIHR is expanding the membership of the governing council standing committee on ethics and appointed its chief scientific officer/vice president as champion of ethics at CIHR. More information regarding CIHR's ethics action plan is available at: <http://www.cihr.ca/e/48037.html>.

Question No. 401—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to the Canadian seal hunt and sealing industry: (a) is the government involved in any programs or initiatives to combat the international misinformation campaigns against the hunt and, if so, (i) what are the details of any such programs or initiatives, (ii) what government departments are involved, (iii) what was the start date of each such involvement, (iv) what was the reason for termination and the end date of any such program or initiative that is not ongoing, (v) how much did the government spend on each such program or initiative, broken down by year and total amount spent to date; and (b) does the government have plans for any further involvement in such programs or initiatives?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, Fisheries and Oceans Canada is not currently involved in any programs specifically aimed at countering misinformation based on the Treasury Board Secretariat definition of program, which is "a group of related resource inputs and activities that are managed to meet specific needs and to achieve intended results, and that are treated as a budgetary unit". However, the department is engaged in ongoing communications and advocacy activities aimed at promoting Canada's strong management regime, which ensure the humaneness and sustainability of Canada's seal hunt. These initiatives also contribute to the effort of combatting international misinformation campaigns.

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DFO monitors traditional and social media as part of its regular business to address concerns, needs, and requirements of the general public. Anti-seal harvest messages covered in the national media or heavily shared over social media are countered with factual and balanced information, via our media relations offices or through our own social media accounts.

DFO has developed a number of printed documents, videos, and other web materials to inform and more factually represent the seal harvest. The material produced by the department also responds to letters from animal rights groups with factual and consistent messaging. Department officials meet with animal rights groups and individuals on occasion to address concerns. We keep our website information up to date and point to it as often as possible so that anyone interested in this harvest has easy access to the information.

The department is able to produce these materials based on the strong management regime that is in place for Canada's seal hunt, which is guided by long-term conservation and sustainability principles and takes into consideration the department's integrated seal management plan, scientific advice, and consultation with the industry. The department has also made training in the three-step process among other items mandatory for all licensed seal harvesters, which further enhances the humaneness of the seal hunt in Canada.

All relevant departments, including Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada; and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, have access to key messages about the harvest to quickly and effectively respond to media reports or information in the public sphere that is inaccurate or false. Letters to the editor are also used to respond to inaccurate information and show support for the seal harvest.

DFO works with industry partners, the Inuit community, provinces and territories, and like-minded countries to convey these messages. The department also works with Canadian embassies and consular offices around the world to ensure that accurate and balanced information is conveyed about the harvest at every opportunity.

These activities are ongoing, however, intensity of requests from external sources such as animal rights groups often increase during the hunting season of April-May. There is also an increased focus brought on by key international events such as the World Trade Organization hearings regarding the challenge of the European Union seal products ban, and the international day of protest against Canada's seal hunt, held annually on March 15.

There has been no termination of these activities as these are of an ongoing nature.

There is no program that can be down by year and total amount spent to date. However, all of the aforementioned communications activities are conducted routinely by DFO. Materials such as printed documents, videos, and web materials are prepared by DFO employees, therefore the cost associated with these materials include mainly salary dollars and dedicated staff time.

The Government of Canada will continue to defend the Canadian seal hunt as noted in the Speech from the Throne, as a sustainable,

well-regulated, and humane industry that provides income for northern and coastal communities where other income opportunities are somewhat limited. DFO will continue ongoing communications activities to combat the misinformation and misrepresentation of Canada's seal hunt.

Question No. 408—Ms. Lise St-Denis:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Canadian Tourism Commission since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Canadian Tourism Commission since January 1, 2013, Industry Canada, in consultation with the CTC, does not hold any information relevant to this question as CTC policy and procedures do not require contracts for purchases under \$10,000.

Question No. 417—Mr. Scott Simms:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Marine Atlantic since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Marine Atlantic does not issue contracts for planned expenditures under \$10,000.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if Questions Nos. 338 to 346, 352, 353, 355 to 357, 361 to 364, 366 to 369, 371, 372, 374, 375, 378, 380 to 383, 385, 388 to 392, 396, 400, 411, and 418 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 338—Mr. Sean Casey:

With regard to the administration of electoral events, what are the titles, dates, and file numbers of all documents, reports or memoranda prepared by or for any department or agency since January 1, 2011, concerning (i) the Canada Elections Act, (ii) the Referendum Act, (iii) the operation or administration of either of those acts, or of regulations made under those acts, (iv) any proposed or contemplated amendments to either of those acts or to regulations made under those acts?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 339—Mr. Sean Casey:**

With regard to government travel, since June 19, 2012: (a) which ministers of the Crown have used rented limousines while on official business, within Canada or elsewhere; and (b) for each such use, what was (i) the date of the rental, (ii) the location of the rental, (iii) the nature of the official business, (iv) the cost of the rental?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 340—Mr. Sean Casey:

With regard to the purchase of cosmetics by Ministers' offices, Ministers of State and Parliamentary Secretaries, since December 13, 2011: (a) how much money has each Minister's office, Minister of State and Parliamentary Secretary spent on (i) cosmetics, (ii) hair products, (iii) beauty supplies; (b) what were the dates of each purchase; and (c) what were the brands and names of the individual products purchased?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 341—Hon. Stéphane Dion:

With regard to commemorations surrounding the 150th anniversary of Confederation, beginning with celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 and ending with the 120th anniversary of the Battle of Leliefontein (in 2020): (a) with whom, including government departments, did the government consult regarding the organization and government spending for the events, (i) on what dates, (ii) what responses were received by the government; (b) how much was spent and authorized to date on each event and program, broken down by department and by program activity, during the fiscal years (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011, (vi) 2011-2012, (vii) 2012-2013, (viii) 2013-2014, (ix) 2014-2015, (x) 2015-2016, (xi) 2016-2017, (xii) 2017-2018, (xiii) 2018-2019, (xiv) 2019-2020; and (c) how much has been spent and authorized to date for public affairs campaigns, public relations campaigns and information campaigns, as it relates to these commemoration activities for fiscal years (i) 2006-2007, (ii) 2007-2008, (iii) 2008-2009, (iv) 2009-2010, (v) 2010-2011, (vi) 2011-2012, (vii) 2012-2013, (viii) 2013-2014, (ix) 2014-2015, (x) 2015-2016, (xi) 2016-2017, (xii) 2017-2018, (xiii) 2018-2019, (xiv) 2019-2020?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 342—Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:

With regard to the Social Security Tribunal: (a) what is the recruitment and hiring budget for fiscal year (i) 2014-15, (ii) 2013-14, (iii) 2012-13; (b) when is the Tribunal expected to be fully staffed; (c) have any appointees left their positions and if so, how many; (d) who is responsible for deciding whether to hire part-time members, what criteria will that decision be based on, and what steps must be taken for that decision to be made; (e) how many Appeal Division members are (i) English speakers, (ii) French speakers, (iii) bilingual; (f) how many Income Security Section members are (i) English speakers, (ii) French speakers, (iii) bilingual; (g) how many Employment Insurance Section members are (i) English speakers, (ii) French speakers, (iii) bilingual; (h) how is workload allocated among members; (i) is region taken into account in assigning cases to members; (j) what kind of performance standards are members expected to meet; (k) when will the Tribunal finalize its policies and procedures and will it make them public immediately; (l) when will the Tribunal finalize its timelines and standards and will it make them public immediately; (m) what is the Tribunal doing to integrate feedback from stakeholders and appellants in its policies, procedures and standards; (n) what kind of office budget is available for members who are not located in Ottawa; (o) what kind of appeal process is available to appellants who would like to have a hearing conducted in person but are told their hearing will take place in writing or over the phone; (p) what kind of medical expertise is required of members who will be assigned Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefit cases; (q) what kind of training in medical issues is being provided to members who will be assigned Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefit cases; (r) what kind of training is being provided to members on local labour market conditions around the country; (s) what kind of sensitivity training is being provided to members to assist them in dealing with members of the public in difficult financial circumstances; (t) what is the Tribunal's policy and standard practice regarding Third Party representatives; (u) will the selected decisions posted on the Tribunal's website be searchable by keywords; (v) how frequently will the selected decisions posted on the Tribunal's website be updated; (w) how many people are employed as administrative support staff for the Tribunal, how many people does the Tribunal intend to employ as administrative support staff when the Tribunal is fully staffed,

and what is the budget for administrative support; (x) how many Tribunal members are receiving a salary (i) between \$90,000 and \$105,000, (ii) between \$105,000 and \$125,000; and (y) how are funds from the Employment Insurance Fund and Canada Pension Plan Fund being allocated to cover the costs of employment insurance and Canada Pension Plan appeals?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 343—Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:

With regard to federal grants and contribution programs: (a) how many programs expired at the end of fiscal year 2013-2014; (b) what are the names of the programs that expired for fiscal year 2013-2014, their total spending authorities and total amount spent for fiscal year 2013-2014; (c) how many programs were renewed for fiscal year 2014-2015; (d) what are the names of the programs that were renewed for fiscal year 2014-2015 and total spending authorities; (e) how many programs will expire at the end of fiscal year 2014-2015; and (f) what are the names of the programs that will expire at the end of fiscal year 2014-2015 and total spending authorities for the current fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 344—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to the government's taxation policy: for fiscal years 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013, what were the tax expenditures associated with the Employee Stock Option Deduction, broken down by individual total income, by household total income, and by province or territory of residence, for incomes of (i) \$0-\$10,000, (ii) \$10,000-\$20,000, (iii) \$20,000-\$30,000, (iv) \$30,000-\$40,000, (v) \$40,000-\$50,000, (vi) \$50,000-\$60,000, (vii) \$60,000-\$70,000, (viii) \$70,000-\$80,000, (ix) \$80,000-\$90,000, (x) \$90,000-\$100,000, (xi) \$100,000-\$110,000, (xii) \$110,000-\$120,000, (xiii) \$120,000-\$130,000, (xiv) \$130,000-\$140,000, (xv) \$140,000-\$150,000, (xvi) \$150,000-\$160,000, (xvii) \$160,000-\$170,000, (xviii) \$170,000-\$180,000, (xix) \$180,000-\$190,000, (xx) \$190,000-\$200,000, (xxi) \$200,000-\$250,000, (xxii) \$250,000-\$500,000, (xxiii) \$500,000 and over?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 345—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to the Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges Incorporated (the corporation): (a) what are the file numbers of all briefing notes prepared for any Minister, Deputy Minister, or Assistant Deputy Minister pertaining to the public-private partnership for replacement of the Champlain Bridge; (b) has the corporation prepared or received any assessments of anticipated traffic loads during the bridge replacement for each of the following St. Lawrence River crossings, (i) the Mercier Bridge, (ii) the Victoria Bridge, (iii) the Louis-Hippolyte-Lafontaine tunnel, (iv) the Champlain Bridge, (v) the Jacques-Cartier Bridge; (c) if the answer to any part of (b) is affirmative, (i) what are the anticipated traffic loads, (ii) what is the file number of the assessment; (d) has the corporation prepared or received any assessments of current traffic loads for each of the following St. Lawrence River crossings, (i) the Mercier Bridge, (ii) the Victoria Bridge, (iii) the Louis-Hippolyte-Lafontaine tunnel, (iv) the Champlain Bridge, (v) the Jacques-Cartier Bridge; (e) if the answer to any part of (d) is affirmative, (i) what are the traffic loads, (ii) what is the file number of the assessment; (f) has the corporation conducted an assessment of the costs of replacing the Champlain Bridge other than through a public-private partnership and if so, (i) what is the file number of any such assessment, (ii) what were the projected costs; and (g) has the corporation conducted an assessment of the costs of maintaining the future Champlain Bridge replacement and if so, (i) what is the file number of any such assessment, (ii) what are the projected costs?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 346—Hon. John McKay:**

With regard to government communications since December 9, 2013: (a) for each press release containing the phrase “Harper government” issued by any government department, agency, office, Crown corporation, or other government body, what is the (i) headline or subject line, (ii) date, (iii) file or code-number, (iv) subject-matter; (b) for each such press release, was it distributed (i) on the web site of the issuing department, agency, office, Crown corporation, or other government body, (ii) on Marketwire, (iii) on Canada Newswire, (iv) on any other commercial wire or distribution service, specifying which service; and (c) for each press release distributed by a commercial wire or distribution service mentioned in (b)(ii) through (b)(iv), what was the cost of using the service?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 352—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to internal trade barriers within Canada: (a) does the government maintain a list of all existing internal trade barriers; and (b) if so, what are the internal trade barriers related to (i) procurement, (ii) investment, (iii) labour mobility for workers in regulated occupations, (iv) consumer-related measures and standards, (v) agricultural and food goods, (vi) alcoholic beverages, (vii) natural resource processing, (viii) energy, (ix) communications, (x) transportation, (xi) environmental protection?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 353—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to each one of Canada’s CF-18 Hornets: (a) what is its aircraft number; (b) at which Canadian Forces Base is it currently based; (c) what is its current age; (d) what is the total number of airframe hours it has logged; (e) what is its approximate expected airframe hours at retirement; and (f) in what year is it expected to be retired?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 355—Hon. Scott Brison:

With regard to the government’s statutory expenditures: (a) for fiscal year 2012-2013, (i) what is the total amount of statutory expenditures made by the government, (ii) what is the breakdown of all statutory expenditures between \$1,000,000 and \$10,000,000 and which department, agency, crown corporation, or other reporting entity funded each expenditure, (iii) what is the breakdown of all statutory expenditures between \$10,000,000 and \$100,000,000 and which department, agency, crown corporation, or other reporting entity funded each expenditure, (iv) what is the breakdown of all statutory expenditures that are \$100,000,000 or greater, and which department, agency, crown corporation, or other reporting entity funded each expenditure; and (b) for each fiscal year 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019, (i) what is the projected total amount of statutory expenditures, (ii) what is the projected breakdown of all statutory expenditures between \$1,000,000 and \$10,000,000 and which department, agency, crown corporation, or other reporting entity is projected to fund each expenditure, (iii) what is the breakdown of all statutory expenditures between \$10,000,000 and \$100,000,000 and which department, agency, crown corporation, or other reporting entity is projected to fund each expenditure, (iv) what is the breakdown of all statutory expenditures that are \$100,000,000 or greater and which department, agency, crown corporation, or other reporting entity is projected to fund each expenditure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 356—Hon. Scott Brison:

With regard to the government’s projected expenditures: (a) what is the projected level of total expenditures for each department, agency, crown corporation, and other reporting entity for each fiscal year 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019, (i) under the accrual method used in the government’s consolidated financial statements, (ii) under the near-cash basis method used in the government’s estimates documents; and (b) what is the projected level of expenditures, under the accrual method used in the government’s consolidated financial statements, for each department, agency, crown corporation, and other reporting entity for each of the fiscal year 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017, (i) at the program level, (ii) at the sub-program level?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 357—Hon. Scott Brison:

With regard to the disability tax credit: (a) for each fiscal year 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013, (i) how many applications did the government receive, (ii) how many applications involved an authorized representative, either by use of a Form T1013, a signed letter authorizing the representative, or any other recognized means of authorizing a representative, (iii) how many applications did the government approve, (iv) how many of the approved applications involved an authorized representative, (v) what was the fiscal impact to the government of the approved claims, (vi) what was the fiscal impact to the government of the approved claims that involved an authorized representative, (vii) how many determinations were appealed, (viii) how many of the appeals involved an authorized representative, (ix) how many determinations were successfully appealed, (x) how many of the successful appeals involved an authorized representative, (xi) what was the fiscal impact to the government of the claims that were successfully appealed, (xii) what was the fiscal impact to the government of the claims that were successfully appealed and involved an authorized representative; and (b) for each fiscal year 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, (i) how many applications did the government receive, (ii) how many applications involved an authorized representative, (iii) how many applications did the government approve, (iv) how many of the approved applications involved an authorized representative, (v) what was the fiscal impact to the government of the approved claims, (vi) what was the fiscal impact to the government of the approved claims that involved an authorized representative, (vii) how many determinations were appealed, (viii) how many of the appeals involved an authorized representative, (ix) how many determinations were successfully appealed, and (x) how many of the successful appeals involved an authorized representative, (xi) what was the fiscal impact to the government of the claims that were successfully appealed, and (xii) what was the fiscal impact to the government of the claims that were successfully appealed and involved an authorized representative?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 361—**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With regard to the three most significant level-three emergencies facing children, namely, the situations in Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, and Syria: (a) what funding increases is the government considering to address the fact that the 2014 UN appeal for CAR is only 21 percent funded (\$114 million of \$547 million); (b) what funding increases is the government considering to address the fact that the 2014 UNICEF appeal for CAR is only 25 percent funded (\$15 million of \$62 million); (c) what diplomatic efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums, to support the protection of civilians in CAR, broken down by efforts aimed specifically at the protection of (i) children, (ii) minorities, (iii) those at high risk of violence; (d) what financial efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums, to support the protection of civilians in CAR, broken down by efforts aimed specifically at the protection of (i) children, (ii) minorities, (iii) those at high risk of violence; (e) what (i) diplomatic efforts, (ii) financial efforts has the government made or is it considering to support the immediate relocation of groups at high risk of violence in CAR; (f) what (i) diplomatic efforts, (ii) financial efforts has the government made or is it considering to support a robust response capacity to disease outbreaks in CAR; (g) what (i) diplomatic efforts, (ii) financial efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums, to support the return of CAR citizens to their villages in those areas that are now safe; (h) what (i) diplomatic efforts, (ii) financial efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums, to support peace and reconciliation processes in CAR such as those initiated by leaders of the main religious communities; (i) what (i) diplomatic efforts, (ii) financial efforts has the government made or is it considering to provide mediation and secure peace in those communities in CAR where social co-existence has not yet broken down; (j) what efforts has the government made or is it considering to leverage its links to the Francophonie to support humanitarian aid and peace in CAR; (k) what (i) diplomatic efforts, (ii) financial efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums to support fair and free elections in CAR in 2015; (l) what (i) diplomatic efforts, (ii) financial efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in what forums, to support an increased security presence, with an appropriate mandate for the protection of civilians, in CAR; (m) if a call comes for broad-based participation in an international peacekeeping operation in CAR, what criteria will the government apply to formulate its response; (n) what funding increase is the government considering to address the fact that the 2014 UN appeal for protection needs for CAR is 7 percent funded; (o) what funding increase is the government considering to address the fact that the 2014 UN appeal for education needs for CAR is 0 percent funded; (p) what efforts and commitments has the government made or is it considering to support children's access to education and the rebuilding of the education system in CAR; (q) what diplomatic efforts has the government made or is it considering, and in which forums, to call and push for increased humanitarian access as per UN Security Council resolution 2139, particularly so that aid can reach the hardest-to-reach children in Syria; (r) what efforts has the government made or is it considering to support aid agencies to reach the one million vulnerable children in Syria who are largely inaccessible as they live in areas under siege or in hard to reach places; (s) what efforts has the government made or is it considering to support (i) the immediate end of the recruitment of child soldiers, (ii) the targeting of schools in Syria; (t) what efforts has the government made or is it considering to encourage donations, broken down by initiatives intended specifically to encourage donations for (i) protection of children, (ii) education of children in Syria; (u) is the government considering an increase in the number of Syrian refugees who will be allowed to come to Canada; (v) what additional funding beyond its annual chronic emergency programming is the government considering to address the fact that the UN six-month response plan for South Sudan for the period of January to June 2014 is only 23 percent funded (\$286 million of \$1.27 billion); (w) what (i) diplomatic efforts, (ii) financial efforts has the government made or is it considering to secure the safety of children in South Sudan; (x) what (i) diplomatic efforts, (ii) financial efforts has the government made or is it considering to secure children's health in South Sudan; (y) what diplomatic efforts has the government made or is it considering to support the peace negotiations between the opposing sides in South Sudan; (z) what adaptations to its South Sudan strategy has the government made or is it considering in light of the current crisis; (aa) what efforts has the government made or is it considering to prevent and respond to the threats of outbreaks of malaria and water borne diseases, and increased rates of malnutrition in South Sudan, now that the rainy season is occurring; (bb) what efforts has the government made or is it considering to protect (i) civilians in general, (ii) children in particular, from violence in South Sudan; and (cc) what efforts has the government made or is it considering to protect humanitarian workers and their operations in South Sudan?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 362—**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:**

With regard to National Parole Board appointments made since December 6, 2011: (a) what are the names of the appointees; (b) what is the professional background of each appointee; (c) what is the appointment length for each appointee; and (d) what is the remuneration for each appointee?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 363—**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:**

With regard to government publishing after the transition to exclusively electronic publications: (a) what are the government's plans or procedures to ensure the preservation, for posterity, of (i) publications published by the Publishing Program, (ii) publications provided by departments to the Depository Services Program; and (b) concerning such preservation, what are the dates, titles, and file numbers of any reports, studies, or dossiers prepared since October 2012 by, for, or on behalf of (i) Publishing and Depository Services, (ii) Public Works and Government Services Canada, (iii) Canadian Heritage, (iv) Library and Archives Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 364—**Hon. Geoff Regan:**

With regard to the free trade agreement between Canada and the Republic of Korea: what were the costs incurred in relation to government travel to the Republic of Korea for the announcement of the agreement on March 11, 2014, broken down by (i) department, (ii) individual, (iii) itemized expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 366—**Hon. Geoff Regan:**

With regard to the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union: what were the costs to the government incurred in relation to government travel to Brussels for the announcement of the agreement on October 18, 2013, broken down by (i) department, (ii) individual, (iii) itemized expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 367—**Hon. Geoff Regan:**

With regard to government advertising: how much has each department, agency, or crown corporation spent to purchase promoted tweets on Twitter in each fiscal year since 2011-2012 inclusive?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 368—**Ms. Joyce Murray:**

With regard to briefing documents prepared for senior associate deputy ministers and associate deputy ministers from January 28, 2014 to the present: for each document, what is (i) the date, (ii) the title or subject-matter, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 369—Mr. Robert Chisholm:

With regard to Employment Insurance appeals: (a) how many appeals were made to the Board of Referees in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Commission's original decision, (v) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Commission's original decision, (vi) appeals granted by the Commission before a hearing was held, (vii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (viii) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (ix) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (x) appeals which were heard within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xi) appeals which were heard within 90 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xii) appeals which took more than 90 days to be heard; (b) how many hearings were held by the Board of Referees each year from 2004 to 2013, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (c) how many appeals were made to umpires in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals made by clients, (v) appeals made by the EI Commission, (vi) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Board of Referee's decision, (vii) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Board of Referee's decision, (viii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (ix) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (x) appeals which were heard within 120 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xi) appeals which were heard within 180 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xii) appeals which were held within 240 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xiii) appeals which took more than 240 days to be heard; (d) how many hearings were held by umpires in each year from 2004 to 2013, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (e) how many requests for reconsideration were made to the EI Commission in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) requests resulting in an overturn of the Commission's original decision, (v) requests not resulting in an overturn of the Commission's original decision, (vi) reviews which took place within 30 days of receipt of the request, (vii) reviews which took place within 60 days of receipt of the request, (viii) reviews which took more than 60 days to complete; (f) how many people requesting a reconsideration from the EI Commission and requesting their case file from the EI Commission received their case file (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after making the request; (g) how many people requesting a reconsideration from the EI Commission and requesting their case file from the EI Commission were refused their case file, broken down by province; (h) how many applicants requesting a reconsideration by the EI Commission were notified by phone of the outcome of their request, and how many were notified by letter; (i) how many appeals were made to the EI Section of the Social Security Tribunal in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals resulting in a summary dismissal, (v) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Commission's original decision, (vi) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Commission's original decision, (vii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (viii) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (ix) appeals which were heard in writing, (x) appeals which were heard over the phone, (xi) appeals which were heard in person, (xii) appeals for which travel costs were granted to the appellant, (xiii) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which were heard within 90 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvi) appeals which took more than 90 days to be heard; (j) in how many cases was the EI Commission informed by the Social Security Tribunal of a notice of appeal (i) within 7 days of receiving the notice, (ii) within 14 days of receiving the notice, (iii) within 21 days of receiving the notice, (iv) within 30 days of receiving the notice, (v) more than 30 days after receiving the notice; (k) how many hearings were held by the EI Section of the Social Security Tribunal in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (l) how many cases are currently waiting to be heard by the EI Section of the Social Security Tribunal; (m) how many people appealing to the EI Section of the Social Security Tribunal received their case file from the EI Commission (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after making the request; (n) how many people appealing to the EI Section of the Social Security Tribunal were refused their case file by the EI Commission, broken down by province; (o) how many people appealing to the EI Section of the Social Security Tribunal were sent an acknowledgement of receipt of their notice of appeal (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after notice was sent; (p) how many appeals were made to the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal regarding Employment Insurance in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) cases where leave is not granted to appeal, (v) appeals filed by the EI Commission, (vi) appeals resulting in an overturn of the EI Section's decision, (vii) cases not resulting in an overturn of the EI Section's decision, (viii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing is held, (ix) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (x) appeals which were heard over the phone, (xi) appeals which were heard in person, (xii) appeals for which travel costs were granted to the appellant, (xiii) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xiv) appeals which were heard

within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which were heard within 90 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvi) appeals which took more than 90 days to be heard; (g) how many hearings were held by the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal regarding Employment Insurance in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (r) how many cases are currently waiting to be heard by the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal; (s) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about communications sent to an appellant rather than to a third-party where requested; and (t) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about logistical problems with hearings held by teleconference?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 371—Ms. Yvonne Jones:

With regard to environmental protection: (a) what are the details of any measures which have been taken since 2000 to monitor or remediate pollution or environmental hazards at Port Burwell on Killiniq Island, Nunavut; and (b) what are the titles, dates, and file numbers of all reports, memoranda, or other documents pertaining to contamination, or to the monitoring or remediation of contamination, at Port Burwell, held by (i) Fisheries and Oceans Canada, (ii) Environment Canada, (iii) Transport Canada, (iv) the Canadian Coast Guard, (v) Public Works and Government Services Canada, (vi) Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, (vii) the Privy Council Office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 372—Ms. Yvonne Jones:

With regard to the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG): what is the location and activity of each ice-breaking vessel in the CCG Fleet on each day since January 2, 2014?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 374—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to the government's wireless policy: how much was spend on advertising and promotion of the policy, broken down by (i) expenditure, (ii) year, (iii) department, (iv) program activity, (v) sub-program activity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 375—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With regard to the government's taxation policy: for fiscal years 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013, what were the tax expenditures associated with Tax Free Savings Accounts, broken down by individual total income, by household total income, and by province or territory of residence, for incomes of (i) \$0-\$10,000, (ii) \$10,000-\$20,000, (iii) \$20,000-\$30,000, (iv) \$30,000-\$40,000, (v) \$40,000-\$50,000, (vi) \$50,000-\$60,000, (vii) \$60,000-\$70,000, (viii) \$70,000-\$80,000, (ix) \$80,000-\$90,000, (x) \$90,000-\$100,000, (xi) \$100,000-\$110,000, (xii) \$110,000-\$120,000, (xiii) \$120,000-\$130,000, (xiv) \$130,000-\$140,000, (xv) \$140,000-\$150,000, (xvi) \$150,000-\$160,000, (xvii) \$160,000-\$170,000, (xviii) \$170,000-\$180,000, (xix) \$180,000-\$190,000, (xx) \$190,000-\$200,000, (xxi) \$200,000-\$250,000, (xxii) \$250,000-\$500,000, (xxiii) \$500,000 and over?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 378—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With regard to Ministers' office budgets since December 13, 2011: (a) how many expense claims were submitted by the Minister or his or her exempt staff, but rejected by the relevant financial officer; (b) what was each rejected claim for and for what amount; and (c) what was the reason for each expense claim rejection?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 380—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With regard to National Defence: what is the detailed breakdown of all costs incurred by the Department of National Defence, or any other department, agency, or crown corporation, associated with the filming of an episode of the television program "Masterchef Canada" at 8 Wing / CFB Trenton?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 381—Hon. Mark Eyking:**

With regard to employment with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: how many involuntary job reductions have been implemented in the Department each year from 2006 to 2013, broken down by each of the eleven Program Activities referenced in part (ii) of the answer made by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to written question Q-221 on March 6, 2014?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 382—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to services for veterans, what are the details, broken down by (i) nature, (ii) purpose, (iii) fiscal year, of the “over \$5 billion [which] has gone into veterans’ services”, referenced by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board during CTV’s “Power Play” on January 28, 2014?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 383—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to the consolidation of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ library system: (a) what are the file or reference numbers for all contracts related to the digitization of library materials since January 1, 2006; and (b) under each such contract, how many books, periodicals, manuscripts, reports, documents, or other items were digitized?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 385—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s Federal Skilled Worker Program: for each of the following time periods: (a) May 4, 2013 to the present; (b) July 1, 2012 to May 4, 2013; (c) November 1, 2011 to July 1, 2012, broken down by academic program and academic institution, (i) how many applications in the PhD stream were received, (ii) how many of these applications were accepted, (iii) how many of these applications were rejected; (d) what were the criteria for determining the success of these applications; (e) how were these criteria determined; (f) which departments, agencies or offices were consulted or gave input in developing evaluation tools for applications to the PhD Stream of the Federal Skilled Worker Program; (g) which groups and organizations were consulted or gave input in developing evaluation tools for applications to the PhD Stream of the Federal Skilled Worker Program; (h) which individuals were consulted or gave input in developing evaluation tools for applications to the PhD Stream of the Federal Skilled Worker Program; and (i) who is responsible for evaluating applications to the PhD Stream of the Federal Skilled Worker Program, and under what authority?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 388—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:

With regard to Canada’s Action Plan on Open Government: for each department, agency, crown corporation, or other government body or entity, (a) what is the title or description, nature, and internal reference or file number (if applicable) of each (i) data-set, (ii) Geographical Information System (GIS) file, which that department, agency, crown corporation, or other government body or entity possesses or maintains, but elected not to publish to the open data portal data.gc.ca since the data portal was created; and (b) in each case, what are the reasons for electing to not publish the data-set or GIS file?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 389—Hon. Carolyn Bennett:

With regard to the operation of the Access to Information Act: for each government institution, (a) how many requests are currently under consideration; (b) how many requests have been under consideration for (i) 30 days or fewer, (ii) 31 to 60 days, (iii) 61 to 90 days, (iv) 91 to 120 days, (v) more than 120 days; (c) how many of those requests have been the subject of an extension of time limits under each paragraph of s. 9(1) of the Act; (d) how many of those requests have been the subject of an extension of time limit for more than 30 days; (e) how many of those requests have been the subject of an extension of time limit for more than 180 days; (f) since January 1, 2013, how many requests have been the subject of a complaint to the Information Commissioner pursuant to s. 30 of the Act; and (g) what specific measures is the government institution taking to expedite the processing of Access to Information requests?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 390—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With respect to the use of the government owned aircraft operated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: since April 1, 2011, and for each use of the aircraft, (a) what are the names and titles of the passengers present on the flight manifest; (b) what were all the departure and arrival points of the aircraft; (c) who requested access to the fleet; and (d) who authorized the flight?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 391—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to the Department of Justice: how much has the government spent in the case of Daniel Christopher Scott, Mark Douglas Campbell, Gavin Michael David Flett, Kevin Albert Matthew Berry, Bradley Darren Quast, and Aaron Michael Bedard v. the Attorney General of Canada, broken down by (i) year, (ii) department?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 392—Hon. Scott Brison:

With regard to research centres in the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: (a) for each fiscal year 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, (i) what was the government’s total expenditure on the research centres, (ii) what was the breakdown of funding to each research centre, (iii) what was the total number of full-time equivalents at the research centres, (iv) what was the breakdown of full-time equivalents at each research station; and (b) for each fiscal year 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017, (i) what is the government’s total projected expenditure on the research centres, (ii) what is the projected breakdown of funding to each research centre, (iii) what is the total projected number of full-time equivalents at the research centres, (iv) what is the projected breakdown of full-time equivalents at each research station?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 396—Ms. Joyce Murray:

With regard to HMCS Windsor: (a) what is the cost to the government for the repair of the submarine, including transport from the water to the repair facility, broken down by specific costs; (b) when does the government anticipate that HMCS Windsor will return to service; and (c) what caused HMCS Windsor to need these repairs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 400—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to recommendations made by Justice Cohen (“the recommendations”) in the Cohen Commission Report of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River, tabled by the government on October 31, 2012: (a) which of the recommendations included in the report has the government taken action on to date; (b) what are the details of all actions the government has taken with regard to each recommendation, including any policies or programs put in place or changed in order to better address issues brought forth by Justice Cohen, and any financial resources allocated to implementing the recommendations; (c) what recommendations has the government identified for action to be taken, but not yet addressed, and why has the government not yet taken action; (d) on which of the recommendations has the government not yet made a decision; (e) on which recommendations has the government decided to take no action, and what are the reasons in detail for these decisions; and (f) what are the details of all briefing documents prepared for all departmental officials at the associate deputy minister level and above in relation to the recommendations, including (i) the date, (ii) the title or subject-matter, (iii) the department’s internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 411—Mr. David McGuinty:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Prime Minister’s Office since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors’ names; (b) contracts’ reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts’ values; and (g) final contracts’ values if different from the original contracts’ values?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 418—**Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining question be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

TABLING OF TREATY—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on April 28, 2014, by the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie regarding the procedural acceptability of Bill C-31, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures.

I thank the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie for having raised the question, as well as the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and the House leader for the official opposition for their comments.

[Translation]

In raising the point of order, the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie contended that Bill C-31 is not properly before the House nor the Standing Committee on Finance since, prior to its introduction in the House, the government failed to table a copy of a treaty included in the bill, namely:

The Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada to improve international tax compliance through enhanced exchange of information under the convention between the United States of America and Canada with respect to taxes on income and on capital.

In his view, the government's routine tabling of treaties at least 21 days prior to introducing implementing legislation, pursuant to its Policy on Tabling of Treaties in Parliament, has evolved into a parliamentary custom and is therefore a prerequisite to debate.

[English]

While recognizing that the policy allows for exceptions, the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie argued that in this instance the government had violated its own policy, thereby infringing upon a custom of the House and creating what he described as a legislative defect.

The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons replied that the process governing the tabling of treaties is in fact a government policy and thus is not found in the rules or practices of the House, nor is it under the purview of the Speaker. He cited numerous Speakers' rulings in support of this position. In addition,

he noted that the policy does provide for exceptions, and thus that what is being done in the case of Bill C-31 is in fact consistent with the provisions of the policy.

The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons added that since the treaty was being implemented through legislation, opportunity existed for the House to debate it and vote upon it before it is ratified.

● (1530)

[Translation]

In raising this matter, the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie made reference to what he considered to have been procedural irregularities. It is important to understand in this case what type of procedure, departmental or House, is being referenced. As well, the member asked the Chair for clarity on whether the use of this policy on treaties has become regular enough to deem it a parliamentary custom such that any deviation from it has a procedural impact. In other words, is this a matter of parliamentary procedure, one over which the Chair has any authority?

[English]

It is clear to me that the policy in question belongs to the government and not the House. It is equally clear that it is not within the Speaker's authority to adjudicate on government policies or processes, and this includes determining whether the government is in compliance with its own policies.

[Translation]

In a recent ruling, on February 7, 2013, I reminded the House of this at page 13869 of Debates:

It is beyond the purview of the Chair to intervene in departmental matters or to get involved in government processes, no matter how frustrating they may appear to be to the member.

[English]

The Chair has nevertheless reviewed the sequence of events described by the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie to ascertain whether there are procedural grounds, as opposed to departmental directives, to support the idea that treaties must be tabled in the House, let alone debated here.

Not surprisingly, the review revealed that many standing orders and statutes deal with the tabling of documents, and *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, on pages 430 and 609 actually enumerates the types of documents that must be tabled in the House. These include certain returns, reports, and other papers that are required to be tabled by statute, by order of the House, or by standing order. Treaties are not mentioned. In fact, the rules and practices of the House are silent with regard to the tabling of treaties.

This leads the Chair to conclude that the manner in which the government has usually chosen to interpret its own policy on treaties cannot be construed as the House having adopted that policy as its own. As always, the rules and practices of the House must emanate explicitly from the House itself. That is not to gain the merits of receiving essential information before considering legislation. However, the distinction between governmental procedures and House procedures remains and must be acknowledged.

Routine Proceedings

Therefore, the Chair cannot find evidence to support the member's contention that Bill C-31 is not properly before the House because of what he has characterized as a deviation from what he contends is the usual practice.

[Translation]

Therefore the Chair cannot find evidence to support the member's contention that Bill C-31 is not properly before the House because of what he has characterized as a deviation from what he contends is the usual practice.

[English]

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

I understand there is a point of order from the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

GROUPING OF AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-23

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the House today on a point of order arising out of the impending report stage votes on Bill C-23, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts and to make consequential amendments to certain acts.

In particular, I want to address the groupings of motions for debate at this stage. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the NDP has already raised points of order on this topic in the House, for example with respect to the report stage of Bill C-45 in November 2012.

In light of the Chair's decision then to group many amendments together for single votes, I feel obligated to rise today to speak on this subject once again. In part what I want to affirm today is the Chair's role to protect members' rights to exercise their duties as members of Parliament, including the right to vote freely on questions that are put to the House.

I would like to quote *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, the second edition, O'Brien and Bosc, which states on page 307 that:

It is the responsibility of the Speaker to act as the guardian of the rights and privileges of Members and of the House as an institution.

On the same page it reads that:

Freedom of speech may be the most important of the privileges accorded to Members of Parliament...

O'Brien and Bosc, a bit later in the same chapter on page 316, note that voting in the House according to a member's conscience is a freedom that all members enjoy in this House, including the Speaker on rare occasions, as you know, Mr. Speaker.

• (1535)

[Translation]

I hope that when I finish speaking, you will agree to let members vote separately on all the motions in amendment at report stage of Bill C-23.

The principle of a free vote is a simple one, Mr. Speaker, one with which everyone in our democracy should be familiar. I am sure that the majority of Canadians who are watching us right now are surprised to see that I must rise today in the House to ask you to ensure that this right is respected when we vote on the motions in amendment at report stage of Bill C-23.

[English]

Because this particular bill is of foundational importance to our democracy, this question becomes all the more crucial. Bill C-23 would make significant changes to our electoral laws, and as they currently stand, in many cases these changes damage the letter and spirit of the Elections Act. As well, as we learned after weeks of scrutiny, a majority of Canadians and virtually all electoral experts are opposed to the bill.

With this much on the line, I believe that it is more important than ever to safeguard members' rights to vote separately on all of the motions in amendment that will affect the bill.

[Translation]

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 76.1(5) states that:

The Speaker shall have the power to select or combine amendments or clauses to be proposed at the report stage...

The note following the Standing Order adds that:

...the Speaker will not select for debate a motion or series of motions of a repetitive, frivolous or vexatious nature or of a nature that would serve merely to prolong unnecessarily proceedings at the report stage...

It is therefore clear that when you select a motion for debate at report stage, this means that it is not of a repetitive, frivolous or vexatious nature, contrary to what the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons likes to say again and again.

[English]

However, nothing in the Standing Orders provides that the Speaker must group the motions at report stage for votes on very different issues. There is nothing about the Chair grouping amendments in an effort to spare the government from lengthy votes.

In the annotated Standing Orders of the House of Commons on page 264, the commentary on Standing Order 76(5) does note that the Speaker has a role in limiting duplication when it states:

When the Speaker selects and groups report stage motions for debate, he or she also decides on how they will be grouped for voting.

A further comment is made that this avoids the House having to vote twice on the same issue. The same explanation is given in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* on page 784:

When the Speaker selects and groups motions in amendment, he or she also decides on how they will be grouped for voting....

I underscore that it is to avoid the House having to vote twice on the same issue.

It seems to me that these explanations are very clear. The selected scheme must ensure that the House does not vote twice on the same issue.

However, I would submit that the voting scheme that has been selected for report stage motions on Bill C-23 goes much further than this very clear instruction. While it is critical that the Speaker not allow the House's time to be wasted, the Speaker must also fulfill his duty to ensure that the right of members to free speech is protected and exercised to the fullest possible extent.

Routine Proceedings

Specifically, when it comes to the report stage motions for Bill C-23, NDP MPs put 110 motions on the notice paper to delete the worst clauses of the bill, in our consideration, and to also delete the clauses that the committee did not have a chance to debate before the government's motion cut off committee proceedings during clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

Of those 110 motions, the Liberal Party submitted motions to delete 46 of the same clauses of the bill as our MPs. However, with regard to 54 of the clauses that we moved to delete, Liberals did not. I think it is reasonable to assume that the Liberal MPs would want to vote in favour of the motions that they also submitted, but would likely want to vote against the motions that they chose not to submit. It is the groupings for voting that puts them in this dilemma of choosing a single vote for all 110 motions; those that they submitted and those that they may not be in favour of.

The same problem exists for the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. She put 13 motions on notice, which were identical to our motions, but 97 of our motions that are grouped along with them were not submitted by the member. It seems logical to me that she too will be put in conflict by having to choose one vote for both parts of this enormous equation; those that she submitted and those that she did not.

What is essentially happening is that the Chair is taking clear, valid, individual questions, and putting them to the House as double-barrelled questions, or, in some cases, questions with many more barrels than two. Looking online, a quick Google search reminds us of what a double-barrelled question is, why it is a breach of the rules of logic, and what kind of absurd results it can yield.

The opening line of the Wikipedia entry for “double-barrelled question”, and we could go to any other dictionary as well, tells us that, “A double-barrelled question is an informal fallacy. It is committed when someone asks a question that touches upon more than one issue, yet allows only for one answer”. One asks two separate questions, but only allows for one answer. That sounds a lot like the situation we are facing here.

The next line tells us, “This may result in inaccuracies in the attitudes being measured for the question, as the respondent can answer only one of the two questions, and cannot indicate which one is being answered”. Again, for report stage on Bill C-23, this sounds very familiar.

These are very basic rules of logical reasoning that are being breached, rules that are necessary to avoid inaccuracies.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, on December 12, 2012, in your ruling on the point of order regarding the report stage of Bill C-45, you said that your decisions were not based exclusively on written rules, but also on the evolutionary nature of procedure and precedents.

At that point, you cited a ruling by Speaker Milliken, delivered on April 27, 2010:

...the Chair is always mindful of the established precedents, usages, traditions and practices of the House and of the role of the Chair in their ongoing evolution.

To this, you added:

This not only confirms that it is not just written rules from which the Speaker's authority is legitimately derived, as suggested by the opposition House leader, but that the evolutionary nature of procedure must be taken into account. It was on this basis of the House's longstanding acceptance, and in fact expectations, of the practices at report stage, in conjunction with the need for adaptation to the current context, that the amendments for Bill C-45 were grouped for debate and voting purposes in the manner that they were.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this matter and your decision on it are of fundamental importance to our democracy and its cornerstone, this House of Commons. I look forward to your ruling.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you have obviously undertaken your responsibilities under the Standing Orders to select grouping for the purposes of debate and voting and applied the usual rules. The usual rule is that the purpose of the voting scheme is to obviate any requirement for two or more votes on the same issue.

I have a lot of sympathy for you, Mr. Speaker, in trying to respond to the complaint made by my friend opposite, in that he actually did not point to a single example in your grouping of where that had not been done properly. The member did not go to a single item or a single vote. He did not make any individual suggestion on where a grouping of yours should be split into two separate votes.

As such, Mr. Speaker, that leaves you with nothing more than what I could call a bit of complaining or whinging, but no real prescription. It also leaves me in the very difficult position of having nothing really to respond to, other than to say that you, Mr. Speaker, have done your duty as required and followed the general practice.

Following in previous decisions, Mr. Speaker, you have indicated that report stage motions are not and have never been selected for debate or grouped for voting on the basis of who the Chair thinks might vote on them and that you had in the past been asked to consider. This is another decision, a ruling from November 29, 2012, at page 12611. In that ruling, the Speaker said:

The Chair is being asked to consider the suggestion that every motion to delete a clause should be voted on separately. This would diverge from our practice where, for voting purposes where appropriate, a long series of motions to delete are grouped for a vote. Since the effect of deleting a clause at report stage is, for all practical purposes, the same as negating a clause in committee, to change our practice to a one deletion, one vote approach could be seen as a repetition of the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill in committee, something which the House is specifically enjoined against in the notes to Standing Orders 76(5) and 76.1(5), which state that the report stage is not meant to be a reconsideration of the committee stage.

That said, though, it has been a long-standing practice for the Chair to select motions to delete clauses at report stage. I reminded the House of our practices in that regard in my ruling in relation to Bill C-38 when I stated, “motions to delete clauses have always been found to be in order and it must also be noted have been selected at report stage”.

You have done that here again, Mr. Speaker. It is difficult for me to see in the arguments made by my friend where the flaw is in your grouping for votes.

Government Orders

•(1545)

The Speaker: I thank the opposition House leader for raising this point, and the government House leader. I will come back to the House in very short order with a decision on this.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

FAIR ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee; and of motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for her excellent speech before oral question period. She gave a good description of all the flaws in the bill. At the beginning of her speech, she also touched a little on the process surrounding the drafting, consideration and amendment of the bill we are considering today at report stage.

Does my colleague think it is reasonable for the government to use its majority to unilaterally change the Canada Elections Act, an act that all parties in the House must be familiar with and comply with during elections? Does the member think it is reasonable for the Conservative government to have done this? Even the Liberals would not have done such a thing. Does she think it is reasonable for the government to use this kind of tactic, and to use its majority to dictate a new elections act?

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank my colleague from Sherbrooke for his question. It deals with one of the main problems with Bill C-23.

No, it is not reasonable for a government to use its majority to dictate changes to the Canada Elections Act. In fact, this practice is something that is never done in several Commonwealth countries. In Great Britain, for example, they are required to consult their electoral commission, the equivalent of Elections Canada, before amending the elections act. I believe the law in Australia also imposes an obligation to consult the opposition parties before amending the elections act.

These are changes that should not be made without broad consultation and a public consensus, because we are talking about the fundamental rules of our democracy. If people no longer have confidence in those rules, we have a serious problem.

[*English*]

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member wanted me to get up and ask a question after her impassioned speech earlier, so I will certainly oblige. I enjoyed my time on the procedure and House affairs committee with her, and everyone who spent a lot of time on Bill C-23.

My question stems from public opinion research that came to light, ironically the day before our government and the minister

accepted substantial amendments to the bill based on commentary in this place and based on people who appeared before committee.

My question relates to vouching. It appears that the vast majority of Canadians, 86%, I believe, including the vast majority of NDP supporters, I might add, agreed with our government that it is reasonable to require someone to show identification when they are voting.

My question is for the hon. member. After all the hyperbole we heard with respect to the decline of democracy with the elimination of vouching, are the NDP keeping that strong position, does it feel that Canadians got it right, or does it agree with the majority of Canadians?

•(1550)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I have greatly enjoyed sitting with him on the committee. He always asks very interesting questions.

In terms of his question, and in relation to the 87% of people polled, I would like to remind him that the question respondents were asked was whether they agreed that people should have to identify themselves before voting. I entirely agree with that. I am among the 87% of Canadians who believe people should have to identify themselves before voting. The difference is that I think that having someone vouch for a person, and having that person sign a declaration confirming the identity of the person, is a sufficient form of identification.

When people were asked more specifically whether they were for or against abolishing vouching, a majority of Canadians were against. I therefore believe that I am still on the side of the majority of Canadians in opposing Bill C-23.

[*English*]

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to offer my voice in this House of Commons on Bill C-23.

I did have the privilege of spending a lot of time, as I said, with colleagues on the procedure and House affairs committee. I also had the ability, particularly as a by-election winner, to follow this issue as it evolved to the present state that is before this House of Commons, which is Bill C-23.

In my brief time that I have, I am going to try to dispel a few myths that still linger out there on Bill C-23.

Government Orders

I have been having great conversations with people in my riding of Durham, and I know people in my riding have been patiently waiting for me to speak on this today. I have also heard from passionate Canadians on all sides of this issue, from people in coffee shops, some passionate University of Toronto professors talking about modernizing our elections law, critiques, positive comments, and that sort of thing. However, the echo chamber and politics around Bill C-23 led to some myths that in many cases still remain out there. Therefore, in my remarks today, I am going to try and dispel some of the myths.

The biggest myth that we still hear in debate in this place is that Bill C-23 came from out of nowhere, with no consultation, no contribution from expert opinion, and that sort of thing, that this was foisted upon Canada, and that it was done with strategic brilliance to favour Conservatives.

The reality is that Bill C-23 comes from the need to fix our antiquated system of administering elections. The “antique” comes from the Elections Canada expert charged with making recommendations on the forum. In fact, Harry Neufeld, at page 24 of his report, said: “...an overhaul is urgently required”.

Why did Elections Canada ask Mr. Neufeld, who served as the B. C. Chief Electoral Officer with distinction for many years, for this report?

Well, Elections Canada asked for it after the calamity of the election in Etobicoke Centre in 2011. We have a fine member for Etobicoke Centre in this place who won a narrow win by 26 votes. However, a lower court in Ontario overturned that result. All election observers recognize that if small margin elections can be overturned so easily, it could lead to a margin of litigation and in fact further lack of confidence in our election results.

Fortunately, in that case, the overturning of the result was reversed and the Supreme Court of Canada held that the member for Etobicoke Centre won. The Supreme Court decision also demonstrated that the system of running elections in Canada was profoundly broken, which led to Mr. Neufeld. In fact, that decision led to a national audit of elections with thousands of polls examined to see where there were errors in the system, including some polls in my 2012 by-election in Durham. That audit allowed Mr. Neufeld to examine the cases of errors in registration, in vouching, and make an urgent plea to modernize our elections law.

Mr. Neufeld was also prescient. We warned that there would be radical resistance because we live in a great parliamentary democracy. Our system seems to run quite well and so a lot of people do not feel there is really a need to reform. However, the Supreme Court of Canada case showed that fraud and irregularities can be considered on par if they result in an election result being overturned. Serious irregularities can lead to that result. We saw that in Etobicoke Centre.

What did Mr. Neufeld's report say about irregularities? On average, there are 500 irregularities per riding. Historically, there are a lot of politicians at the provincial and federal levels with the nickname “landslide”, and they usually get that nickname by winning their first election with a very narrow result.

● (1555)

In fact, most general elections have between 5 and 15 seats decided by 500 or fewer votes. Well, the audit showed that there are at least 500 irregularities or errors per riding. There was a real risk to the margin of litigation and no end to an election result in a community. It is unfair if that community has to wait months for litigation to the Supreme Court of Canada to determine who it is sending to the House of Commons.

Another myth I would like to address is vouching. I asked my hon. colleague a question on that because it was portrayed by some voices in the media that the elimination of vouching was the decline of our democracy as we know it. People were going to be disenfranchised and their constitutional right to vote was going to be struck from them. That is not the case. In fact, there were numbers quoted by some learned people, even before committee, suggesting that hundreds of thousands of people would lose their right to vote because of the elimination of vouching.

The fatal error with that logic is the fact that they did not ask the question to determine whether the person who vouched had any ID. I would note that only a few provinces allow vouching and no municipalities in the province of Ontario allow vouching. To suggest that everyone who used a vouching approach to voting would not have any ID to satisfy the basic registration requirements is simply erroneous. That number was thrown out and repeated many times, even by good members of this place, without any basis in reality.

What was the reality from the audit? Mr. Neufeld looked and 120,000 people in Canada vouched in the 2011 general election. There were 120,000 vouching transactions and he found 95,500 errors. It is hardly something that inspires confidence in a G7 country. They were serious errors. Often there were multiple mistakes made in the vouching process. Someone vouching several times for one person is not allowed, and that sort of thing, but Mr. Neufeld found that 42% of all vouching transactions, almost half, were serious errors. When we connect that with the Supreme Court that showed that serious errors and irregularities are as bad for our system as fraud, clearly something needed to be done. Mr. Neufeld, at page 28 of his report, said that it would be very difficult to fix vouching.

Therefore, we think it is reasonable to ask Canadians to show identification when they vote. Our amendments have also recognized that some people may have difficulty with the address component at registration, so there will be some flexibility built in for those people. However, I sincerely hope that in the future that ambiguity is eliminated so that we can have absolute certainty.

Government Orders

I would also refer people on this subject to the 2007 “Electoral Participation of Electors with Disabilities” report commissioned by Elections Canada. Dr. Prince ran that study that looked at specific groups that were under-represented on voting day. That report from Elections Canada, as well as people who appear before committee, confirmed that voter participation, low turnout rates of students, members of first nations, or the homeless, are not related to identification or registration issues. Their participation challenges are totally distinct and something we should address, but when it was being connected with vouching, it was done in a way to cause unnecessary concern among Canadians.

Finally, we have heard a lot in this place about the 39 forms of identification that Elections Canada provides. I found many people, even media commentators, thinking that those 39 pieces were in Bill C-23. Those forms of identification are outlined by Elections Canada after specific consideration for groups with low participation rates. I have suggested that attestation letters used by first nations, schools, and shelters could actually improve turnout. Those are there now. They were there in the last election.

• (1600)

Bill C-23 is an approach that we feel would modernize a system that has demanded modernization for a generation. Our modest amendments are as a result of having listened to the concerns and would strengthen the bill. I think we are going to have better results, in the future, in our elections.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to the statements by my distinguished colleague, I noticed that he has demonstrated the truth of Einstein’s words. Einstein defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Once again, we have an ill-advised bill that will immediately be challenged if it is passed. It will be challenged by the first nations, who will be asking by what right the act is being amended to give them less access to the vote. Student associations will be saying the same thing.

The Chief Electoral Officer must have the power and the resources to promote voting among young people and to tell them not only to go out and vote, but where to go to vote. Why is the government stubbornly insisting on enacting a law that has been rejected by all the experts, including the ones it appointed?

I would therefore like to know why we are going to vote on a bill that will immediately be challenged in the courts.

[English]

Mr. Erin O’Toole: Mr. Speaker, the member clearly did not listen to the final moments of my remarks where I showed that Elections Canada’s move to the 39 forms of identification, with specific attestation letters for those on first nations reserves, would actually allow a template that could be used now to raise turnout and participation by that community. It is interesting to note that turnouts are higher at some band council elections. There is the ability to run localized and provincial elections. We would now have a better way to do that federally.

I would invite the member to look at the Supreme Court decision that I think sets the stage to show that Bill C-23 would improve our

system. The majority opinion there said it would be better to keep the inherent confidence in our system to ask someone to return to the polls with the proper registration materials than it would be to allow somebody to vote who may not be entitled to vote.

• (1605)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the issue of vouching. At committee, I understand that there were concerns regarding people who might have some issues with showing their address. I know there were some amendments made.

I wish the hon. member would talk a bit about vouching and tell us again what the issues are, in terms of people needing to present basic ID, the ID that is available, and a bit about the changes that we made. I think they are important changes and, more important, Canadians believe that most people should be able to produce a piece of identification showing who they are.

Mr. Erin O’Toole: Mr. Speaker, the Neufeld report showed that vouching is extremely difficult to administer. That is what led to the 42%, or higher, error rate. In fact, if we look at multiple errors, 80% of vouching transactions had errors. Why is that? Mainly because Elections Canada officials are well-meaning, on the ground in the ridings, but they tend to work one or two days every few years. Vouching is very complicated and, really, comes from an era when people did not have as many forms of ID on them as they do on any given day.

What our amendments to Bill C-23 would do, to answer the second part of my friend’s question, is address the fact that, yes, not enough of the 39 forms have ID. Even though there is the ability for attestation letters to satisfy certain groups, like students or those living in shelters, that sort of thing, we feel that the added safeguard would maximize voting by allowing someone to take an oath as per their residence that would be verified at the polls. They would still need to show identification as to who they are, so that no irregularity or fraud could result, but if they were not able to satisfy the residency requirement, an oath could be administered and they could proceed to mark their ballot. I think it is a good balance.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I rise to talk about Bill C-23, the unfair elections act.

We have sat through committee. We have gone through several amendments, the vast majority proposed by the government. I would love to say that I take satisfaction in knowing that two of my amendments were accepted by the Conservatives, but they were just minor fixes, inconsequential stuff. There was nothing major.

My friend is trying to egg me on. I want to thank my hon. colleague from Burlington for his encouragement in getting those amendments passed, albeit diminutive in nature.

Mr. Mike Wallace: The amendments or the member?

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I opened it up for a joke, and I got one.

Government Orders

I want to say that the whole process was a little disappointing.

By way of explanation, it seems to me that the public pressure had been so high and so heated that changes had to be made on their part, especially on vouching. Rather than go through what one would consider the regular process of making changes and amendments at committee stage, the government did it through a pre-study, asked for by the minister and given to the Senate and the Conservative senators there. "Theatrics" is perhaps one way of describing it. However, there were some positive steps in the right direction.

My only problem is that the Conservatives did good measures to a bad bill, but unfortunately, the bill is still bad. In effect, we voted yes to the vast majority of the amendments the Conservatives proposed, but in the end, we voted against the particular clauses, and then in the end, against the bill itself because of many measures.

There is one I would like to highlight. I tried to get a question in earlier, because I wanted to ask some of my Conservative colleagues about the fact that I truly believe that in the next election, one of the biggest mistakes will be realized very quickly.

Not just on election days but on advance polling days, we are going to see a lot of seniors and students with voter information cards. Many people still call them voter identity cards. Those cards can no longer be used as a piece of identification.

Let us remember, people need three elements to qualify to vote. They have to prove that they are Canadian citizens. They have to prove that they are over 18 years of age. The third measure is that they have to prove their addresses, where they live in a riding, to vote in a particular riding. This is what could pose a problem.

I have been in four campaigns. My fifth one is coming up. I remember campaigning and going to many seniors' homes. Just prior to voting day, they would have that card sitting on the kitchen table or pinned to the refrigerator. It was always ready, right there, ready to take, ready to use when they voted. That is now going to be lost because of this. That is unfortunate, because the address on that card was actually updated more than a person's driver's licence, which is acceptable. It is one of the very few pieces of ID published by the federal government, in this case through Elections Canada, that actually has an address on it.

The way I described it in committee was that it is like a boarding pass. People cannot get on a plane without a boarding pass. In many seniors' minds, they could not vote without that card. It was a voting pass that told them that they were good to exercise their right in this democracy.

There are a lot of examples being thrown around the House about vouching, about going into a bar and vouching someone who is above the age of 19, or going across the border and vouching for a person's identity, which people cannot do, to get into another country.

Let us bear in mind that voting is a charter right we have as citizens. It is in section 3 of the charter. Some of my colleagues brought up potential challenges as a result of this. I do not doubt it, but I will not delve into that too much, because it has already been handled.

However, I would like to talk about some of the other changes.

● (1610)

The Chief Elections Officer is now capped at one renewable 10-year term. The opinions and guidelines were also discussed. The CEO now may inform elementary and high school students about the voting process. This is a wonderful process. Groups such as civics students run elections within the school system. These are kids below the age of majority. They go through the exercise, and Elections Canada helps subsidize their efforts to bring democracy into the classroom. It is a wonderful exercise. Although that was not allowed under the original form of Bill C-23, the Conservatives allowed an exemption to do that.

Here is my problem with that. That is good for that particular measure, but what about other measures Elections Canada hopes to invest in to further our principles of democracy by informing and teaching people about how they vote and why it is important to vote? They could be not just for secondary students but also for post-secondary students. There could be programs for first nations. There could be programs on many facets that would allow Elections Canada to bring forward democracy and to advertise in a non-partisan way. The government says that this should be left up to the parties.

I would be disappointed if the only way people could inform themselves about voting in the next election was pinned on negative advertising. We all do it, some more than others. We all partake. The problem with that is that it is not an inspirational, non-partisan way to convince people to exercise their right. I know that the fundamentals about the location and how to do it are contained in this bill, but there are certain things that have to be communicated to individuals that may not be caught up in this bill.

I will give an example. Earlier I mentioned voter information cards, the identity cards. They cannot be used to vote. It should say that on the card, because a lot of people will be disappointed. However, can Elections Canada go out and inform people specifically that they can no longer use that voter information card? These are things that were covered in this bill before. What is happening here is that we are seeing that Elections Canada is being held down in a way that is just not healthy.

Many of us travel abroad. We go for work reasons. We go to Europe. We go to Asia. I went on a recent trip to Mongolia with the Governor General. One individual said to me that they love Canada in many respects, and one of the reasons is the independence of the bureaucracy, and in particular, the independence of Elections Canada. It is a model to be used by countries that are not as experienced in democracy. Mongolia is a prime example of a young democracy. The independence of that agency is sacrosanct. This bill takes measures by which it would put it into a corner and handcuff it in a way that would not allow it to act as the agency that we so love and that many countries revere.

An example is the commissioner. We thought for sure that there was an amendment coming about this. We thought, most certainly, that there would be at least some small modicum of flexibility, but there was none, to allow the commissioner what that person asked for, which is the same type of powers contained in the Competition Act. Instead, the Conservatives have taken that position and put it into public prosecutions. This was not an exercise in independence. This was an exercise in isolation, and that is what is going to be detrimental in future investigations.

The other amendments on some of the loopholes, such as calls to raise money from people who have donated in the past, have been eliminated. That is fine.

As I said before, though, a lot of these measures have made a bad bill better, but they certainly have not made a bad bill good.

•(1615)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor for his speech. He worked with us in committee on Bill C-23. I greatly appreciated his various views during the clause-by-clause study phase of the proposed legislation.

I would like my colleague to speak in general about the process followed by the government in the case of Bill C-23, for example, about the fact that there was very little, if any, consultation. When electoral legislation is tabled in a country like Canada, should we encourage such an approach, specifically having the majority impose changes to such a fundamental piece of legislation as the Canada Elections Act? I would like to hear his views on the subject.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I first want to congratulate my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for pronouncing the long name of my riding correctly in one go. She is probably the only non-Speaker who has managed to do that, and I congratulate her.

[*Translation*]

I congratulate the hon. member.

[*English*]

I want to say that the member brings up a valid point.

Just recently I read an article in an Australian newspaper by a famous columnist in Australia who advised his government that what was happening in Canada was the way not to go. Fundamentally, he said that what Canada should have done was bring a draft of a bill to a multi-party committee on electoral matters, which exists in Australia. He urged the government to consult with other parties through the committee process. I would say that we should go even further than that and put it out to the public for their input as well.

The unfortunate thing is that the only time it was consulted on before it hit this House was within the Conservative caucus itself. I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall to see what that bill looked like and how it differed from this bill. It is unfortunate, because due to the rules in the House, we could have put that bill to committee before second reading, which would have been a substantial measure, given the size of this bill. It is not as if the

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Conservatives have not done this before. When they first got elected, they did it with their first environmental bill.

This would have been the proper way of doing this. I thank my colleague for bringing that up.

•(1620)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague might provide some comment on what he said about it being a bad bill with some good amendments and that we need to underline the fact that it still is a bad bill on issues such as compelling witnesses.

Would my colleague like to provide further comment on that?

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North, because I only touched on that briefly.

The power to compel testimony is germane to the issue we have had unfolding over the past year and a half, and that is the robocall scandal we talked about. There were a lot of people who refused to talk to the commissioner on investigative powers because they did not really have to. They were not compelled to testify. They may have known something. I do not think it was just because they were nervous. Obviously, they felt that there was something there that they did not want to talk about that made them nervous, and therefore, it should have been explored.

We had people from the Competition Bureau as witnesses, in particular the person who has the power to compel testimony by applying to a judge. I asked that person point blank in committee, “Do you use this?” Without hesitation, he said, “Absolutely. We use it all the time. It is necessary to enforce the regulations contained within the Competition Act”.

That is the Competition Act. This is the Canada Elections Act, which is connected directly to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms under section 3.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak once again to this bill, this time at the report stage. Given the stage that the bill is at today, it is worthwhile talking about how we got to this point and the level of consultation that went on, and to the amendments we are debating today.

First, I had a lot of feedback in my constituency about how we were talking to Canadians about this, how we were getting feedback from our constituents on the bill and how we were exposing it.

I have to congratulate the work of the committee, of people of all political stripes in here today, because committee study is often something that does not get a lot of attention in the press. A lot of Canadians are not even aware that some of our parliamentary committees sit and work. However, the committee has done a lot of work on the bill. What does that work mean and what does it look like?

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First, the parliamentary committee, since the bill was introduced, had over 15 meetings to study it. The meetings are usually about 2 hours in length, but I know the committee sat late, so that is roughly 31 hours of study. A parliamentary committee comprises members from the government, as well as the official opposition and the Liberal Party. Some of our independent colleagues sat in there as well to hear the debate.

Over 72 witnesses from all different aspects of civil society from across the country participated, testified, gave their feedback and submitted written briefs. In addition to that, we have had hours of debate in the House. We have had probably well over 100 questions on the bill in the House of Commons, be it in question period. Certainly, too, we have seen some very firm public opinion research on where the public thinks some of the components for the bill specific to identification production should be, which I will speak to in a moment.

The bottom line is that all that work is what we do in the House of Commons. It is what we do as legislators and parliamentarians. We look at legislation as it is presented by the government. That is why committees exist. That is why we sit there. It is to listen to people who come to committee and then amend the bill. At report stage reading, as we have here today, we look at amendments. Some of them are quite substantive, and many of them are in direct response to some of the feedback that was heard at committee. We then have a chance to vote on the bill after the amendments have been incorporated.

It is worth taking a moment to say that we did something that resembles work on this bill. We did some pretty good work when it came to committee. I have to commend my colleague, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform, for going through all the testimony, listening to it, doing the background research, looking at different legal options of how some of that stuff could be incorporated, drafting the amendments and then presenting them so we could debate them in the House of Commons.

I want to firmly push back against anyone who says there was not consultation on the bill. If anyone wants to look at the list of witnesses, which is publicly available on the Parliament of Canada website, published on the committee website. So is the transcript, or the *Hansard*, of the committee. People can look at that as well and see the fact that we had over 72 witness groups. We all brought questions to those committees. I was not on the committee, but those who sat there brought questions for the witnesses based on constituent feedback. This is how the legislative process works, and it worked here.

Given that it worked and that we had a great degree of consultation, we have some amendments in front of us to debate the substance of today and then vote on later this evening.

One of the key pieces of subject matter in the debate was the voter identification component of the bill. I quite enjoy the subject matter of this legislation, so I did review a lot of the committee study myself. I found it interesting, because I do not think that there was one witness who the opposition or anyone else produced who could say that they personally would not be able to vote, given the changes proposed in the bill. That was absolutely stunning. Why is that? It is

because there are 39 forms of ID that can be produced to prove identity.

• (1625)

A poll done by Ipsos Reid showed that over 85% of Canadians, many of those who support the opposition parties, felt it was reasonable to produce voter identification.

Further to that, after the committee study was complete, the amendment put forward on voter identification was found to be quite solid.

If there is any issue, it has to be addressed now. After doing the diligence out of the committee study, I could not find any group that would not be able to vote given the tightness and the ability that we have put around the forms of identification to be produced.

The amendment with regard to this would allow electors to vote with two pieces of identification that would prove their identity and a written oath as to place of residence and proof that another elector from the same polling division, who would provide his or her identity and residence by providing documentary proof, would also take a written oath as to the elector's residence. This new measure would allow those who did not have identification proving their residence to register and vote on polling day.

Here is the great part. Because irregularities were identified in the last election and to address that valid concern, "to ensure the integrity of the vote, new verification of potential non-compliance will be done after polling day, and an audit of compliance with registration and voting rules will be done after every election..."

We have put in an amendment that should capture everyone.

Here are some other components that I do not think have not been addressed in the debate today.

We are expanding the hours. We have added additional time for people to vote. If Elections Canada does what we are telling it to do through this bill, which is educate people on how to vote, where to vote and when to vote, then the electorate should know that it has additional time to vote and prepare to find one of those 39 different pieces of ID. We are providing better customer service to them with some of the changes laid out in the bill in terms of how Elections Canada will support the actual vote itself.

It is absolutely critical for members to take into consideration that we have expanded Canadians' accessibility to vote. Not only that, but we have enshrined it in Elections Canada's mandate. It has to provide these critical pieces of information to Canadians. It needs to focus on that information so people will know the types of identification they have to bring.

I did a lot of door knocking in my community while the bill was being debated. The only thing that came up at the door was that people were shocked they could vote without identification. It was a shocking, jarring, thing. They were surprised that people could vote without identification. I think Canadians know that providing ID is the right thing to do.

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As parliamentarians, should we talk about how to produce identification, what type of identification should be provided, under what circumstances, can someone attest to the identify of a voter? Sure, let us have that discussion, but I am confident that with the amendment that has been provided today, Bill C-23 is solid in that regard. I encourage anyone who is listening to this debate to check out the 39 different forms of ID which are applicable.

I was also quite glad to see the amendment that civic education programs for primary and secondary schools would be included. That is a positive amendment.

The core thing I spoke to earlier was that it was the responsibility of candidates and civil societies to go out and convince people why they should vote rather than have a government agency tell people why they should vote. That is a core principle in the bill of which that Canadians can be proud.

It is with great enthusiasm that I support the content of Bill C-23.

I also congratulate the committee for hearing from over 72 witnesses and for taking a really robust look at this legislation and coming up with these amendments.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister pointing out that 72 witnesses made submissions. It is all very well to listen to them, but it would have been better, if not critically important, to try to understand them. Clearly, the Conservatives listened to what these 72 witnesses had to say, but failed to understand that they wanted the government not to proceed with this harmful electoral reform initiative.

I find the minister's comments, and in particular her view that political parties have a duty to encourage people to vote, especially dangerous. The right to vote is not a partisan exercise, but rather a fundamental right. It should not be left to partisan organizations. Rather, the voting process should be overseen by an independent non-partisan agency responsible for ensuring the people can exercise their right to vote. Even Preston Manning stated that these initiatives were ill-advised.

How does the minister intend to encourage people, specifically first nations, which have a different political culture, to embrace that of the Conservatives because it suits their purposes from an electoral standpoint?

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, perhaps something was lost in the translation, but I believe my colleague just said that the bill would allow political organizations to manage the vote. If my colleague reads the form and substance of the bill, he would see that is not even close to the case.

This is all about how Elections Canada carries out its mandate. Elections Canada is still a government organization which has responsibility for various aspects of the vote.

Since I have been elected, my colleagues opposite have been talking about how we are going to proceed with democratic and electoral reform in our country. Certainly, Bill C-23 is in response to some of those questions that all of us in the House have had.

The fact is that we responded and put Bill C-23 before the House. I do not believe in just having empty rhetoric and saying that all the witnesses said that the bill should be killed. This is about coming up with concrete amendments, doing the right thing as parliamentarians and coming up with legislative change, and that is what we have done. We have excellent amendments and my colleague should support this bill.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made the point that the bill is in response to requests made in how Elections Canada carried out its mandate, and so changes were made.

Who made these comments to the Conservatives before the bill was tabled?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I spent a great deal of time laying out the process at the front end of my speech. The legislative process is one by which a government can present legislation to the House and then committee can respond to it through study, which is exactly what happened in this case. Over 72 witnesses came forward and responded to the legislation, which was put in front of the House and amendments were made.

My colleague opposite also understands that there is cabinet confidence after legislation has been proposed to cabinet. This is a great example that Canadians should be looking at as to how work can be done here. Government tables legislation, it goes to committee, and committee hears a bunch of witnesses and reads a bunch of different briefs. The government responds with amendments and we debate them in the House of Commons. It is a great thing of which to be a part.

• (1635)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague reiterated the parliamentary process. When a bill is proposed, it goes to committee and amendments are made.

It is also important to recognize that always before bills are presented or created, there is an upfront process where Canadians often have input from across the country as to what they see in a broad vision term. Perhaps the member could speak generally on how governments actually consult even before legislation is drafted.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I could do a ten-minute speech on this.

There are constituent emails, round tables, telephone town halls, one-on-one meetings, feedback from colleagues to the minister directly, caucus input and Twitter. I debated this bill on Twitter. There are so many different ways that we pull in input as parliamentarians, and that is our job. It is to synthesize it, put it into a bill and translate it to committee study. That is what happens here.

Canadians should watch this with great interest, and I certainly hope my colleagues will support the bill.

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[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I feel pleased and privileged today to discuss Bill C-23 at report stage, on behalf of the constituents of Sherbrooke who elected me to this House.

It is as a result of some considerable bungling by the Conservative government that we have reached the report stage of this bill today. A few amendments have been agreed to. It still has a number of shortcomings, and I am going to have to vote against this bill. We will be voting on it this evening. Last Wednesday, the bill came back to the House after consideration in committee. After only 10 minutes of debate, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons informed us of time allocation. The next day, that is, last Thursday, we voted on a time allocation motion for it.

There has been about one day and a half of debate at report stage. However, more than 150 amendments were submitted in committee, if I remember correctly. I was not directly involved in the process, but I followed it closely, as did most of my colleagues. We have had only a day and a half to debate this bill, unfortunately.

This is the reason why I said I was privileged to speak to this bill, before it is voted on tonight at the report stage, following the work done by the committee. The committee itself was not able to perform its work as one would have wished. The committee hoped to hold hearings across Canada and hear from voters directly, since there are voters in other places besides Ottawa. There are voters everywhere in Canada, and they all have their own specific characteristics in their own communities. It would have been important for us to be able to consult them. The government refused. The government, in addition to limiting debate, even refuses to consult people outside Ottawa on this bill. As I said at the beginning of my speech, the government has made a mess of the whole process regarding this bill.

Furthermore, the bill was tabled without consultation and with a time limitation on debate, and there was not any consultation even before the bill was introduced in the House. If there was any consultation done at all, it was among the members of the Conservative Party. We doubt that the leaders of the Conservative Party were deeply involved in the drafting of this bill.

You may recall that the former minister for democratic reform at the time had announced, with much fanfare, on a Monday or Tuesday, that he was going to introduce his democratic reform bill. This was a bill we had been calling for, for some time. He announced it at a press conference, and he was very proud to say that the government was finally introducing its bill to reform the elections act, as the opposition had been calling for, for quite some time.

Ultimately, it seems that the bill was discussed in the Conservative caucus. The following Thursday, the Conservatives announced that they were going to drop the election reform bill and send it back to drafting. What happened between the time it was announced that the bill was being introduced and the time it was withdrawn? The minister decided, after consultation, that not everybody was happy with it. I assume this was in the Conservative Party, because it was after the caucus that he decided to cancel the introduction of the bill in the House.

Therefore this is a bill we never saw the original version of. Today, we are debating this version of the bill, which has probably been heavily sliced and diced or dictated by the Conservative Party members and the party leaders. We cannot guess everything that went on at the caucus meetings, but we can get an idea from all the reversals and turnarounds, as those we saw in the past around election reform.

All of that was discussed in committee recently. Nearly 70 witnesses appeared before the committee, and they were all against this bill for various reasons. There may have been someone who seemed to support the bill, but that was cutting it a bit fine, if I can put it that way.

● (1640)

Eventually some government amendments were adopted, but the opposition's amendments were virtually all rejected, with a few exceptions amounting to small corrections to the wording of the bill.

We are used to this attitude from the government. The Conservatives believe that they are right and everything other people say is wrong or is politicking. If someone opposes them, it is because they are partisan. Whether it be the former auditor general, judges or former chief electoral officers, whenever an individual states an opinion publicly on a subject—a bill, in this case—the Conservatives perceive them as an enemy.

Their enemies list gets longer every time someone decides to voice their opinion, even though sometimes it is well formulated and informed, and there is nothing partisan about it. When you oppose one of the Conservatives' proposals, you are playing politics, in their eyes, and you get added to their enemies list.

However, witnesses' concerns were well founded. I will allude to them in my speech today in an effort to convince a few Conservative members to vote differently from the Prime Minister this evening. That is what I would most like to see happen.

Ours is a parliamentary democracy. Each member was elected in his or her riding. In each riding, 100,000 people voted, and the makeup of this House reflects the outcome of the vote. I hope that the members of all parties who were elected to the House will vote this evening according to their conscience and their convictions. I hope that a handful of Conservatives will vote against the government's bill because it is possible for them to do so.

Members were elected in their ridings to represent their constituents. Once in the House, these members vote according to the views of the majority of their constituents. Personally, I know full well what the views of my constituents are on this matter, and that will affect how I vote this evening. I hope that the Conservatives and my colleagues across the political spectrum will also vote according to the will of the majority of their constituents. I assume that many Conservatives will vote against the Conservative bill this evening, that they will listen to reason and that ultimately they will find a way to improve upon the bill's provisions, however difficult that might be.

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Tonight's votes will be very important because the constitutionally guaranteed right to vote is on the line. Some government members drew comparisons between this and the voting methods employed by political parties during leadership races and party fundraising tactics used in leadership races. They were confusing many issues. However, there are no comparisons to be made when it comes to the right to vote in federal elections.

A person's right to choose who will govern the country is unassailable. However, I am worried that this right is now being threatened, given that the bill would eliminate the ability of a voter to prove their identity through vouching. At present, when voters are unable to provide proof of their identity at a polling station, they can get someone to vouch for them, thereby ensuring their constitutional right to vote. Without this option, I am worried that this fundamental right will be called into question. I hope the Conservatives will realize this and vote against the proposed electoral reform this evening.

• (1645)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech. He talked about the charter and the right to vote. Could he tell the House and the other members how this electoral “deform” will negatively impact the right to vote in Canada?

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vaudreuil—Soulanges for his question, which gives me the opportunity to finish my speech about protecting the fundamental right to vote.

Vouching is used when a voter shows up at a polling station and realizes that he or she does not meet the identification criteria. These criteria can sometimes be complicated and voters do not necessarily know them in advance. Not all Canadians will show up at the polling station with all of the proper pieces of ID.

If we allow vouching, all Canadians will have the opportunity to vote when they arrive at the polling station. It will enable them to retain that fundamental right. If someone cannot have the ID required, they still have the right to vote. We cannot prevent that person from voting because they do not have a piece of ID that cannot be obtained in a few hours at a government office. This person needs to retain their fundamental right to vote.

This bill is destroying the right to vote in Canada. This is unfortunate. I hope that the Conservatives will join us when we vote this evening.

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I think there was an underlying message in his speech. There is a debate between the strong desire to control everything that happens and the desire to make it easy to vote. I think that as elected members of Parliament, it is our duty to make voting more accessible.

What does my colleague think about this dichotomy between exercising absolute control over what is done and making it easier to vote? What does he prefer?

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I would prefer to make it easier to vote. Unfortunately, the Conservatives are imposing restrictions on voting and making it more complicated. I am

concerned that there will be a court challenge to some of the provisions in the bill, which will be the new elections law once it is passed.

It is very unfortunate that the government, although aware of this possibility, did not try to remedy the situation in committee. The government is always trying to take more control. In the end, some people will lose out and Canadians will have fewer options in a number of areas, including, in this case, when it comes to voting.

The major problem with all of this is that the government thinks that all Canadians are fraudsters. Consequently, it has to do everything it can to prevent fraud. We do have to be careful and put measures in place. However, after all the debate about the possibility of vouching, I feel that the Conservatives believe that all Canadians are potential fraudsters who will attack the system, which has to be made as complicated as possible.

We are headed in the wrong direction. We have to make it easier to vote and have fairly strict rules to ensure the integrity of our elections, which is vital to the proper functioning of our democracy.

• (1650)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I would like to remind all hon. members that when the Chair calls to resume debate, it is the responsibility of the member to come to stand in the House at that point and not to count on the list. The list that we have is for advisory purposes and does not trump those who come to their feet.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak in the third reading debate of Bill C-23, the fair elections act.

This important legislation would ensure that much-needed reforms are brought to a number of areas of electoral law in the Canada Elections Act.

The government committed, in the 2013 Speech from the Throne, to introduce comprehensive changes to Canada's election law. With the fair elections act, we have fulfilled that promise. The bill's measures are common sense, reasonable, and Canadians agree with them.

I want to remind the House that our government has been clear from the start that it would listen carefully to the debates and witnesses, and consider reasonable amendments that would improve the bill. On April 25, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform announced that the government would support amendments on a wide range of subjects dealt with by the fair elections act—14 areas, in fact.

My remarks today will focus on some of these amendments and will demonstrate why the fair elections act would be made even better with these changes. In particular, I would like to highlight the importance of upholding the integrity of elections and of protecting Canadians' right to vote. These are objectives of the bill that all hon. members should join me in supporting wholeheartedly.

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One excellent example of how Bill C-23 would put those important objectives into practice is the new voter contact registry. This initiative would prevent fraudsters from taking advantage of communications technology to deceive Canadians out of their votes.

Another very important example of how the fair elections act would uphold the integrity of the vote and protect Canadians' rights to vote is the bill's provisions on voter identification, as modified by the amendments that were passed by the procedure and House affairs committee.

I will return to these topics a little later.

Before I turn to some specific amendments, I would like to reiterate that the proposals in the fair elections acts are reasonable, common sense, and Canadians support them. I would like to remind the House that recent polls show that Canadians agree with the measures in the fair elections act. In particular, 87% believe that requiring voters to prove their identity is reasonable, and 70% believe it is acceptable to eliminate vouching.

Most of the amendments that I am about to describe respond to various commentaries and suggestions that have been made during numerous hours of witness testimony in the procedure and House affairs committee, as well as many further hours of witness testimony in the Senate legal and constitutional affairs committee.

Such an airing of opinions and constructive debate is a sign of a healthy democracy. I am proud to say that this legislation would strengthen our democratic practices.

The first two of the government-supported amendments to Bill C-23 that I will describe today concern voter identification practices. Canadians should have complete confidence that their federal electoral system would operate with the integrity that they expect and deserve, and the requirement to show identification is a key part of ensuring that is the case. While the fair elections act would require people to show identification proving who they are before they vote, the government supported an amendment to assist those whose address is not on their identification to register and vote.

Specifically, the amendment would allow electors whose identification does not have an address, to vote by providing two pieces of identification that prove their identity and by signing a written oath as to their residence, provided that an additional safeguard is met. The additional safeguard that would be required in such circumstances is that another elector from the same polling division, who proves his or her own identity and residence by providing sufficient documentary proof, must also take a written oath as to the residence of the elector whose identification does not have an address specified on it.

● (1655)

To ensure the integrity of the vote, new procedures to detect potential non-compliance will be done after polling day. In particular, Elections Canada will be required to check the list of those who signed the oaths as to residence, to make sure that no one voted more than once or attested for another elector without being eligible to do so. Moreover, a mandatory extended audit of compliance will be done after every election in order to ensure that the rules are followed.

Unlike the current rules for vouching, every voter will now need to show identification, without exception. The message to voters from these measures is "Get identification. From now on, you will need it to vote". Canadians can choose from 39 allowable forms of identification. Government-issued photo ID is not required.

The next government-supported amendment to Bill C-23 that I will mention today also relates to voter identification requirements.

The amendment will clarify that all of those who apply for a special ballot and vote at the office of the returning officer must prove their identity and residence in the same way as they would at the polling station.

A reasonable concern was expressed that the fair elections act would, in practice, create two processes, one for local electors and another for electors who are away from their electoral district. This amendment will have the benefit of ensuring consistency in the identification procedures that are practised for voting at all polling stations, and at the office of the returning officer.

I believe the amendments to Bill C-23's voter identification measures that I have mentioned will further strengthen the needed reforms that this bill brings to the current voter identification process.

The next amendment to the bill that was introduced by the government that I wish to touch on today concerns the public information and education mandate of the Chief Electoral Officer.

This amendment clarifies that the Chief Electoral Officer may communicate with the public, but where he advertises to inform electors about the exercise of their democratic rights, he can only do so on how to be a candidate; when, where, and how to vote; and what tools are available to assist disabled electors.

That policy recognizes that there are two things that drive people to vote, motivation and information. Motivation comes from parties and candidates giving people a reason to vote. Information should come from Elections Canada on where, when, and how to vote.

In other words, political parties and candidates appropriately provide the "why" and Elections Canada appropriately provides the "how".

The government also supported amendments to ensure that the Chief Electoral Officer knows that he has always had the freedom to speak or report on any matter. There was some confusion on this when the bill was introduced. These amendments will clarify that issue. Furthermore, amendments stipulate that the Chief Electoral Officer may support civic education programs that explain voting for primary and secondary school students.

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The next of the government amendments that I will mention today deals with the central poll supervisors. The bill originally sought to implement a recommendation of the procedure and House affairs committee that central poll supervisors be appointed in the same manner as the deputy returning officers. Nevertheless, the government has, as promised, listened, and has decided to not proceed with this particular reform.

Another of the government's amendments was to include a provision requiring that the chief electoral officer consult the Commissioner of Canada Elections before issuing an advance ruling or interpretation note. The amendments also provided more time for the Chief Electoral Officer before he has to issue an advance ruling or interpretation note, while reducing the consultation period with the registered parties.

Some reasonably pointed out that the timeframe set out for the Chief Electoral Officer to fulfill those duties might be insufficient to enable them to be completed appropriately. The government listened, and supported amendments to deal with this issue.

• (1700)

Moreover, amendments to the advanced ruling will give them precedence. This will ensure a higher degree of consistency and predictability with respect to those instruments.

It is undeniable that the amendments I have just outlined for the House demonstrate conclusively that, as promised, this government was following the debate on the fair elections act with openness to ideas that would strengthen this common sense bill. The fair elections act was a terrific piece of legislation when introduced, and it has now been improved. We are moving forward with this valuable legislation.

I hope hon. members will join me in supporting the important reforms of the fair elections act.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments, but having said that, it bears repeating that it is important to recognize that we are changing election laws. When election laws are changed, there is a certain expectation that the public as a whole has of the government of the day; that is, that it is being perceived as being done properly, and the process is in place that ensures it is not just one entity, in this case the Conservative Party, that is pushing through amendments.

What would the member think if we heard of another country where the governing party was the only party forcing changes to election laws? I suspect the member would speak out against that, believing that if we are going to change election laws, that there is a responsibility of the government of the day to work with different stakeholders, including opposition parties; the election authority, in particular Elections Canada, which is world renowned in terms of its true independence; and the Commissioner of Canada Elections. There are stakeholders who should have been consulted prior to the legislation coming into the House. At the very least, the government should have shown a clear demonstration of consensus building before bringing in legislation and then using its majority government ultimately to pass it.

Content aside, strictly on process, does the member not recognize that there is something wrong in terms of the process? With

hindsight, Conservatives could have done a much better job in bringing the bill to the House.

• (1705)

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, Canada is one of the greatest democracies. We follow procedures according to our rules and our laws. I do not think we need to delay the implementation of the fair elections act. We are evolving in time. We are doing the right things, and we have the procedures for that.

I do not think we ever break any rules of the Parliament of Canada. We can use the rules which are enshrined in the 1,294 pages in O'Brien and Bosc. I think we advance forward with these procedures. I do not think that we are in an undemocratic country or are using undemocratic procedures.

I do not like hon. members trying to show our procedures in Parliament as being like other countries, dictatorial countries. In this country, we have the best laws, and Parliament is improving them in the best manner.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague probably knows, often the people who take the Canadian Forces recruits' course are in limbo. They do not have a permanent assignment and so they do not have an address for a certain period of time.

Does my colleague believe it is fair that Canadian Forces recruits cannot vote because they are temporarily unable to provide an address, yet they will spend the rest of their lives defending the government decisions that are imposed on them?

[*English*]

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned the armed forces. Both of us served in the armed forces, and we know that if someone wants to enter a base, that person needs to have identification at least. Another individual cannot vouch for them to enter an institution.

This common sense legislation asking voters for identification is commonly used everywhere in the country if an individual wants to access any kind of institution. I do not think this is a great issue. People need to show identification. Then comes the address. People going to a polling station will be able to show somebody proof, who will vouch for their address and verify it. The amendment that was proposed and then accepted by the committee responds to the hon. member's question.

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, almost two years ago the NDP tabled a motion demanding more powers for the Chief Electoral Officer, and for the government to present a bill within six months. This motion was unanimously adopted by the House.

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In the fall of 2012, in response to the Conservatives' non-action on the bill, my colleague, the member for Toronto—Danforth, presented Bill C-453, which proposed changes to the Canada Elections Act to prevent and punish electoral fraud carried out through fraudulent phone calls. Many of the provisions he suggested are now included in Bill C-23. There is no denying that those concessions by the Conservatives prove the effectiveness of a strong opposition by the NDP and by Canadians, who came together and stood up for our democracy.

Yes, as a result of this strong opposition, the Conservatives have backed down on some of the fundamental aspects of the unfair elections act. Unfortunately, they have also shut down the study of this bill with half of the NDP's common sense amendments still under debate. In good faith, the NDP proposed close to 100 ways to improve this widely denounced bill, but the Conservatives rejected all of them.

The Conservatives have a track record of breaking election laws. The Minister of State for Democratic Reform has been attacking Elections Canada for many years. Bill C-23 clearly attacks Elections Canada by cutting its powers, and this is unacceptable.

Removing powers from the Chief Electoral Officer instead of increasing his power is a huge mistake. Placing the Commissioner of Canada Elections under the Director of Public Prosecutions and rejecting NDP amendments that would have given investigators the tools they need to crack down on electoral fraud is another huge mistake.

With Bill C-23, the commissioner would no longer be part of Elections Canada. The reality is that there is a necessary working relationship between the commissioner and Elections Canada, which includes daily consultation. This change would cause a great loss of expertise and knowledge transfer. Sharing information is vital there, and I am glad that after the NDP pushed back, a government amendment at committee would now allow information-sharing between the Chief Electoral Officer and the commissioner.

The minister has been misleading Canadians into thinking it is a requirement of independence that the commissioner be separated from the Chief Electoral Officer. It is entirely appropriate that the commissioner be integrated within the structure of Elections Canada. In Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec, the chief electoral officers assume all functions.

Thanks to the strong NDP opposition, the government also scaled back its attack on the Chief Electoral Officer's ability to engage in public education, though the government amendment only half removes this new muzzle. The Chief Electoral Officer is now limited to advertising only certain aspects of the electoral process, those being when, where, and how to vote. He is also limited to participating in voter engagement programs only at the elementary and secondary levels. Elections Canada is still prohibited from partnering with other groups, such as university-level programs to engage youth aged 18 to 25 to vote. Some reports suggest that a significant number of young people who pass on voting the first time they are offered a chance are likely not to vote, ever, in their lifetimes. Limiting the Chief Electoral Officer to engage in public education is certainly not a way to increase voter participation,

especially among young new voters and demographics that tend to have a lower turnout, such as first nation communities.

The Chief Electoral Officer would also need to seek Treasury Board approval to hire technical experts for conducting research and delivering reports such as the Neufeld report and the IRPP report on fraudulent robocalls in the 2011 election. This is sheer government interference with the work of an officer of Parliament.

Thanks to the NDP and civil society opposition, the Conservatives have amended the bill to allow vouching for addresses. However, this bill still prohibits the voter information card to be used to prove addresses as one of the two pieces of ID.

● (1710)

Voter information cards benefit those people who face challenges in establishing their address when it is time to vote: youth on campus, seniors, and aboriginal people. Prohibiting the voter information card from being used as a piece of ID in an election would deter electors from voting, as indicated by the Chief Electoral Officer.

In fact, the Conservatives should have looked into the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations for prevention measures, such as providing more training and information to elections staff and volunteers and the need for better recruitment and advance recruitment of election workers. Instead, the Conservatives rejected an NDP amendment on this.

I would like to underscore the fact that some key elements are missing in Bill C-23. This bill would not give more power to the Chief Electoral Officer to request financial documents to ensure political entities comply with their obligations. This was in our 2012 motion. Instead, the bill would grant more power to the auditors hired by political parties.

The Elections Canada commissioner had asked for powers to compel witnesses. The commissioner, who would now be under the Director of Public Prosecutions, would not be granted such powers. Several provincial election laws grant chief electoral officers or commissioners the power to compel persons to appear before them and provide information or produce records. This laws are in place in Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, and Yukon.

Canadians should not trust the Conservatives to stop fraud. Canadians deserve better.

● (1715)

[*Translation*]

I would like to share some very interesting facts and quotes from witnesses who were questioned by my colleagues in committee.

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To put this in context, only 70 people were able to speak against Bill C-23 in committee, and only 22 committee meetings were set aside for an issue as important as changing our elections act. It is sad that the Conservatives think that reforming our country's democracy is only worth 22 committee meetings. We were given just 40 hours or so to study such an important bill.

There are plenty of quotes from people who shared our opinion. They said that major changes needed to be made to the bill. There are good things in the bill, but as parliamentarians, we have to pick bills apart to make sure that they will improve people's lives and democracy in our country. There are already so many people who do not vote. We have to ask ourselves whether this bill will enable more people to exercise their right to vote. Unfortunately, I do not think that we will be able to answer that question.

Just outside my riding, there is an Indian reserve. I would like to quote Teresa Edwards, who was asked about aboriginal voting. When the subject of vouching came up, she was told how great it was that people could use any of 39 pieces of ID to vote. Here is what Teresa Edwards said about that:

...it shows the amount of privilege that's in this room that people have no comprehension of how difficult it could be for aboriginal people to obtain identification.

...This will only further put up barriers for aboriginal people and it can't help but make someone wonder, is that the intent? Is this really democracy or is the intent to actually limit aboriginal voting in the next election?

It is a shame, because we are wondering the same thing about this government. We get the impression that the government does not like some people and that it is trying to prevent them from voting. That is what Ms. Edwards was suggesting in her comments to the committee. To me, that is serious.

As I said in my speech, right now, most young people in our country do not vote.

Last weekend, I met some young people in my riding and most of them told me that they were not sure whether they were going to vote and that they do not trust the current government. They wondered whether things would be different with another government.

I tried to explain to them that the NDP is different. We are not here for politics, power, money or success. We were all elected on a wave. No one knew we were going to be elected. We are here to defend values. That is what I tried to explain to them. It is interesting to note that these are people who did not vote. As I was saying, there are many studies.

Apathy is Boring is a group I have met with often and they tell me that the danger is that people who do not vote when they first become eligible to do so will likely never vote. It is therefore crucial that the government realize how important it is to get young people and first nations to vote and why this type of bill is sad for our democracy.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech was excellent.

I have a question. My colleague was a teacher before becoming an MP. This bill would prevent the Chief Electoral Officer from implementing public education programs.

Does she think that the government should reconsider its partnership approach with youth groups? She mentioned Apathy is Boring. Other groups would like to partner with Elections Canada to teach young people about voting. Perhaps she could comment on that?

• (1720)

Ms. Isabelle Morin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question because that is where I was going with my speech.

It is vital for young people be able to vote. First, their vision for our country and their future is not at all that of the government that currently represents them. Second, we have to educate people. Many seniors vote today because they were taught to vote. It was important and it was a fundamental value of society. They voted the first time they had the opportunity and they continued to vote.

It is important to partner with groups that have that mission. Apathy is Boring is one such group. There are many others that believe that young people do not vote today mainly because they are not asked to vote. When the NDP youth caucus met with them, they said that if you want young people to vote, you have to ask them to vote. That is the first condition. Creating projects that interest them is the second condition. There has to be a platform for youth. However, I repeat that the first condition is to ask them to go and vote.

If we do nothing and do not partner with groups on the ground, who seek out young people and can talk to them and understand how to get them interested in democracy, unfortunately we will be headed towards a decline in voter participation. That is dangerous for our democracy and for our future. If we brag about being the best democracy in the world, it is because people vote. If there are no groups to encourage them, young people may no longer vote. It is important to maintain our partnerships with groups that focus on young people.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on the point of democracy and focus in on the issue of process, putting the content of the legislation to the side for now.

In the context of what I indicated to a Conservative speaker, which is if we observed a country, another democracy outside of Canada, where we saw a governing party not working in any fashion whatsoever with any of the other stakeholders and proclaiming itself to be a democracy changing election laws, I suspect we would be outraged. We would be outraged at how a country would go about changing election laws and not having any real consultation with other political entities, whether they are parties, or independent election authorities and so forth.

Would she provide her perspective on how she believes other countries look at the process of how Canada, using a majority Conservative government, is pushing through legislation?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Isabelle Morin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my Liberal colleague for his question.

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I think it is disgraceful that the government is using its majority to change laws as fundamental as those associated with our democratic system. What is even more regrettable is the fact that it is not surprising.

Since I became an MP in the House, I have seen the government use its majority again and again to push through bills that Canadians do not want. If every opposition party disapproves of a bill, at some point, the government should begin to wonder. It is not a question of ideology; it is about changing our laws for the better.

However, this government uses so many time allocation motions that it has set a record. It is not even taking the time to listen to the amendments we put forward.

During the clause-by-clause study of this bill, half of the clauses could not be debated because the Conservatives decided that they did not want to take the time.

That is frustrating, and I think that the international community could easily say that we are not truly democratic.

● (1725)

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-23, the fair elections act.

The bill would fulfill a commitment made by our government during the last Speech from the Throne and in it our government committed to bringing forward a comprehensive election reform proposal that would protect the votes of Canadians at the polls.

The fair elections act would ensure that constituents in Etobicoke Centre, along with all Canadians, would be in charge of democracy by putting special interests on the sidelines and the rule-breakers out of business.

It would also make it harder for people to break the law. It would close loopholes in big money. It would impose tough new penalties on political imposters and those rogue calls and it would empower the Commissioner of Canada Elections with sharper teeth, a longer reach and a freer hand.

The fair elections act would make our laws clear and easy to follow. It would make life harder for election law-breakers and easier for the honest people to take part in democracy.

I believe Canadians agree that our current system can be improved. For example, 87% of Canadians believe it is reasonable to require someone to prove his or her identity and address before voting. Based on my conversations with constituents in Etobicoke Centre, I would also submit that a majority of my constituents would agree with this view. This is why I am proud that our government is committed to enhancing our electoral laws and protecting the integrity of each and every ballot.

What I would not support is the NDP's suggestion that people should not require any ID to vote. The fair elections act would prohibit the use of vouching and voter information cards as replacements for acceptable ID.

Studies commissioned by Elections Canada demonstrate mass irregularities in the use of vouching and high rates of inaccuracy on

voter information cards. Under the act, voters would continue to have 39 different forms of authorized identification to choose from to prove their identity and to prove their residence.

Our government has also recently announced that under the fair elections act, electors with no identification that proves their residence would be allowed to vote with two pieces of identification that prove their identity and a written oath as to their residence provided that another elector from the same polling division, who proves his or her identity and residence by providing documentary proof, would also take a written oath as to the elector's residence. These changes are abundantly fair and reasonable.

Stopping possible election fraud is just one of the many positive changes that the fair elections act proposes to make. The act would protect voters from rogue calls and from political imposters by punishing those who would attempt to deceive Canadians. For example, Bill C-23 would create a mandatory public registry for mass calling and impose prison time for impersonating election officials. It would also increase penalties for deceiving people out of their votes.

The fair elections act would give the Commissioner of Canada Elections sharper teeth, a longer reach and a freer hand to ensure we would have strong elections law enforcement.

The bill would allow for small donations coming in and keep big money out of our elections by ensuring donation limits could not be circumvented. Big money from special interests can drown out the voices of everyday citizens, like people in Etobicoke Centre, who have supported me, and those constituents who come to my office often looking to discuss current legislation or seeking assistance on a variety of issues. Theirs are the voices that should be reflected in the House.

Lastly, the bill would provide better customer service for voters by adding another advanced poll day and ensuring Canadians would know where to vote, when to vote and what ID to bring with them.

The fair elections act would also explicitly require Elections Canada to inform disabled voters of the extra help available to help them vote.

I believe the majority of my constituents would agree with me in that the fair elections act would make life harder for election law-breakers and easier for honest people to take part in our democratic process.

● (1730)

I do want to address something about our youth. I reach out to schools and to various groups in my constituency and beyond when I am asked to speak for a variety of reasons. I tell people, including at citizenship ceremonies, that citizenship comes with duties and responsibilities. One of those duties is to vote. I have said that before and I have said that often. I tell that to school groups, to youth, and to people frequently when I speak in front of public groups. It is very important that people understand that, to make sure that our democracy works as it has.

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Make no mistake, Canada is a heaven on earth. There are people clamouring to come to our country because of what we have, because of the strength of our democracy, and how hard we work to ensure that each and every person is enfranchised with their vote.

I am very proud of the bill. I am very proud to stand for it. I am very proud to speak for it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a very simple question. In 2011, the Chief Electoral Officer allowed voter information cards to be used as proof of address. However, to supplement that, individuals also had to have a piece of ID with their name on it.

Now that voter cards cannot be used any more, people will have to have two pieces of identification: one with their address and another with their name. Of the 39 acceptable pieces of ID on the list, only a tiny percentage include an address. It is extremely difficult for the most vulnerable segments of our society, such as students, seniors and aboriginal peoples, to obtain that type of ID.

What will he say to the Canadians who are listening and who may be denied the right to vote? I know that there are a lot of people listening, including some from his riding. What will he say to those people who will not be able to vote in 2015?

[*English*]

Mr. Ted Opitz: Mr. Speaker, the member partially answered the question herself. There are 39 different forms of ID that can be used. The vast majority of people in our country agree that valid forms of ID should be applied. It is reasonable. There are all sorts of other things that we do in life to prove our identity and where we live.

The accommodation made in the bill to allow an oath to be signed and proof provided through the two pieces of ID is very reasonable. It came out of hours and hours of testimony before committee. The minister was very broad-minded in looking at the bill and making changes that accommodated these issues that were brought up in testimony before committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise again in the House to speak about the bill on electoral reform. Unfortunately, the bill quickly got on the wrong track. Furthermore, there has been no real consultation on this bill.

The bill affects the quality of democratic life and the rules that ensure fair representation of constituents in Parliament. The bill was written on the back of an envelope and in line with purely partisan interests. No time has really been taken to speak to Canadians or Quebecers about it, to hear from experts or to hold public consultations on the bill.

In fact, they have pulled a rabbit out of a hat. Even the person who is the most knowledgeable about elections in Canada, the Chief Electoral Officer, has not been consulted. This is a uniquely Conservative bill, made by Conservatives for Conservatives.

A number of colleagues mentioned today that if this kind of process were going on in a foreign country, we would be asking ourselves a number of serious questions about the validity of an

electoral reform package that appears tailor-made to suit the party in power and favour it. There has been no consultation with the opposition parties nor with Canadians. Right from the start, the whole process has been flawed. What was the result? Work that has been entirely botched.

It is sad to see, perhaps for the first times in Canadian history, a bill that is close to what we call voter suppression in the United States. In the U.S. they take steps to try to prevent people from exercising their right as citizens to choose the people who will be passing legislation over the next four years, if there is a majority government.

It is an attack on democratic rights and on clearly targeted and vulnerable groups, such as seniors, students and first nations peoples.

The NDP, the official opposition, has stood up. It is a rare thing in this Parliament, but we have managed to bring enough pressure to bear on the government for it to back down from some of the most deplorable aspects of the bill. As the leader of my party said, what was at the beginning a very bad bill is today only a bad bill.

The bill is not a good bill, but for some situations we have been able to prevent the worst, specifically with regard to allowing certain people to vote with someone to vouch for them. There is still the issue of a personal relationship with the registered voter; we will see how that turns out on the ground on election day or on advance polling days.

Members of the NDP believe it is important not to prevent the 120,000 people who voted through vouching in the last election, three years ago, from exercising their right to vote. The NDP can take credit for this, because we showed the Conservatives that this was clearly absurd and unnecessary, since it was not based on any evidence or proof of fraud—apart from the imaginary fraud in the mind of a Conservative backbencher. We managed to save this system.

However, the bill is an attack on democracy and on the principle of equality among citizens. Earlier today, I heard my colleague proudly say that they would be keeping big money out of elections. I agree with the principle that money should not be able to have undue influence over politicians or the outcome of an election. If they want to keep big money out of elections, they should reduce the limits on electoral contributions, not increase them.

By raising the maximum annual donation to \$1,500 from \$1,200, the Conservatives are going in the exact opposite direction from what they say. My colleagues opposite probably have a number of friends who are able to write cheques for \$1,500. I have the feeling this may benefit the Conservative Party. Moreover, if a candidate can invest \$5,000 in their own campaign, that will give people who have the ability to do that an unfair advantage.

The rules of the game are being interfered with and twisted in favour of people who have financial resources that are well out of reach of the average Canadian and Quebecer.

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●(1735)

This is one of our serious concerns. This is one of the reasons why, as progressives, we are going to fundamentally oppose this election reform, or “deform”.

Given that there was no consultation, that a gag order was imposed in the House, that a gag order was also imposed in committee, that not all of the opposition’s amendments could be considered, and that the Conservatives wanted to go at top speed and botch the job with a bill that in fact changes the fundamental law of our democracy, there are things we were not even able to discuss. The public might have wanted to hear some discussion of proportional voting.

I think people who are frustrated with having a majority government that was elected with only 38% of the votes cast might think about the possibility of having a proportional voting system that would result in representation in the House that is closer to the will of the people.

A first past the post voting system produces such distorted results that the winner’s bonus is truly disproportionate. A large majority of Canadians voted against the Conservative Party three years ago, and they ended up with a majority Conservative government. There is something broken in this system. Canada is one of the rare countries in the world that still use this old voting system.

It might have been worthwhile to discuss a regional mixed-member proportional voting system, something like what there is in Germany. The NDP proposed an amendment in committee that was struck down because the Conservatives did not want to hear anything about it. This is extremely worrisome and it is a shame, because this is a missed opportunity. Reforms of the Elections Act are rare. It is not something we do every year.

How could the Conservatives have failed to understand that people could use the voter identification card issued by Elections Canada and delivered to us in our mailboxes as proof of residence, when it is accompanied by another identity card that does not show the address? That is extremely practical. It is widely used, particularly in senior citizens’ homes where people are able to go down the stairs or take the elevator to go and vote, because the polling station is in their building. Those people often do not have driver’s licences or the documents on the long list the Conservatives have given us. The same thing is true for aboriginal populations.

Let us read what Mr. Mayrand, the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, had to say last March about the accuracy of the information on the voter identification card:

It is worth noting that the VIC is the only document issued by the federal government that includes address information. The Canadian passport, for example, does not include an address. In fact, with an accuracy rate of 90%, the VIC is likely the most accurate and widely available government document.

I see no reason why we would deny ourselves that. Mr. Mayrand goes on to say:

During the election period, revision activities at the local level also increase the accuracy of the VIC. This likely makes it a more current document than even the driver’s licence....

It is essential to understand that the main challenge for our electoral democracy is not voter fraud, but voter participation. I do not believe that if we eliminate vouching [at the time, vouching was still prohibited] and the VIC as proof of address we will

have in any way improved the integrity of the voting process. However, we will certainly have taken away the ability of many qualified electors to vote.

Once again, the particularly scandalous thing about the bill we have before us is that it makes it harder for people who would like to go and vote in good faith and would like to keep using the little card distributed by Elections Canada.

There are many other things that should have been changed or amended in this bill. How can Elections Canada have lost the power to investigate? How can the Commissioner of Canada Elections be moved under the jurisdiction of the Director of Public Prosecutions, when everything was working well and in sync? Elections Canada is being stripped of its investigative powers. As well, the act is not getting enough teeth and strength to give Elections Canada the ability, as part of an investigation, to compel a witness to come answer questions from Elections Canada in order to find out what really happened. Why not give Elections Canada sufficient powers to be able to shed light on what happened?

If Elections Canada had had the power to compel witnesses in the robocall scandal, I think we would have found out exactly what happened.

●(1740)

Today, Elections Canada has hit a wall because the Conservative minister is refusing to give the agency the tools it needs to do its work.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his speech.

I want to talk about something very specific that happened in committee and that I would like to hear his thoughts on. He spoke in detail about the use of the voter information card. He even quoted the Chief Electoral Officer, who explained why the voter information card was very accurate and was a very good document in general.

The Conservatives did not want to agree to our amendments to reinstate the voter information card as an accepted piece of ID. Then, in committee, when we realized that they would not change their minds on using the voter information card, we proposed a new amendment to write in bold on the voter information card that voters could not use the document to vote. That way, people would not assume that they could use the card to vote and they would make sure they had the right pieces of ID.

I do not think there is any downside to that and I am still dumbfounded by the fact that the Conservatives voted against that amendment.

●(1745)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. I was not aware of this detail, which is actually more than just a detail.

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It is indicative of the primary purpose of the bill, which is to prevent people from voting and to throw up roadblocks in front of them. In real life, if average Canadians are used to going to vote with the card that comes from Elections Canada and then all of a sudden, once they are at the polling station, they are told that it is not sufficient and that they need other ID, then they are going to return home and I would be very surprised if they went all the way back to the polling station again to vote.

That is a shame because this will likely happen to thousands or even tens of thousands of Canadians who will not have been properly informed, as this amendment would have made it possible to do, by indicating on the card at least something about the identification they may need. Although the voter information card can no longer be used for the purpose for which it was created, it could have still been used to tell Canadians that the procedure and the rules have changed.

It is also a great pity that, with the exception of certain groups, Elections Canada will no longer be able to spend money or conduct campaigns to encourage people to vote, even though voter turnout in Canada has been plummeting for decades. It means we are denying ourselves a major voice that could encourage Canadians to exercise their right to vote. I do not understand why the Conservatives are going down this road.

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his speech.

It was very beneficial to hear the Chief Electoral Officer's quote about voter cards. It would have been even more beneficial if the Chief Electoral Officer had been consulted. The Conservatives could have learned something. However, that is a topic for another time.

Does my colleague think it is possible to trust a government that was found guilty of several counts of electoral fraud? There was the in and out scandal, of course, but we also know that many government MPs were accused of electoral fraud in relation to their spending. Then there were also the robocalls.

Is it possible to trust a government that does not obey the law or uphold democratic tradition? Why does this government always try to push ahead even though it knows full well that, according to our country's democratic tradition, electoral reform is usually agreed upon by the majority, out of respect for all Canadians?

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on this government, which has been found guilty of fraud and could not care less about democratic tradition.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question, but I do not think the answer will surprise anyone.

I do not trust the Conservative Party in general, and especially not when it comes to reforming the Elections Act. They are repeat offenders. They have been caught red-handed many times. Here are some examples: the minister for the Labrador region who had to resign, the member for Peterborough who had to leave his caucus because there were problems with his election spending, the in and out scandal, and the robocalls saga—in which a Federal Court judge proved that the Conservative Party database had been used to trick people into going to the wrong polling station.

No, I do not trust the Conservative Party to manage the economy, to take care of people, to manage our health care system or to reform the electoral system. Letting them make the laws is like asking the fox to guard the henhouse.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to the fair elections act.

The fair elections act is a bill that would make significant changes to Canada's election laws. It would close loopholes to big money, impose new penalties on political imposters who make rogue calls, and empower law enforcement with sharper teeth, a longer reach, and a freer hand. The bill would also implement 38 of the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations.

As a member of the procedure and House affairs committee that studied this bill in great detail, I can say that through the committee process, we were able to make a great bill even better with a number of amendments made at committee through the work that we did there. A very thorough study was done and a very thorough debate happened around the bill at committee and in the House of Commons.

There are two particular elements of the bill that I would like to address in my brief remarks here today.

The first is a key change that the fair elections act would make in putting in place a very clear process that the Chief Electoral Officer would have to follow when issuing changes to the rules governing elections.

Everyone in the House has obviously been through an election or two, and in some cases many more than that. Some of us have probably encountered situations in which the rules were not as clear as we would have hoped. Complicated rules can certainly bring about unintentional breaches. They can even intimidate everyday Canadians from taking part in democracy. That is unfortunate in a democracy. We want to encourage more people to get involved, make it easier for them to stay involved, and reduce the risks of transgressing the rules.

The bill before us would make the rules for elections clear, predictable, and easy to follow. Just as importantly, it would provide a system whereby the Chief Electoral Officer could help citizens avoid making mistakes.

The bill contains provisions that would improve the transparency and consistency of election rules. It would do this by drawing on the successes of other government agencies in improving their own regulatory regimes through more communication and greater transparency. They have put in place a system of notices to advise regulated entities on how the law applies to them. These generally take the form of guidelines and interpretation notes or bulletins. For example, the Canada Revenue Agency routinely publishes bulletins to advise taxpayers on how it will interpret and apply specific provisions of income tax law.

Government Orders

These procedures help to clarify the rules. They establish an accessible and transparent body of information to help interpret the rules. They enable interested parties to make preliminary inquiries without prejudice to explore how the rules are likely to be interpreted.

Under the bill before us, a registered party would be able to request from the Chief Electoral Officer an advance ruling or a written interpretation of questions regarding the Canada Elections Act. The Chief Electoral Officer would be required to respond within 60 days of the request. The bill would provide a further 30-day notice period before the ruling or interpretation would be formally issued. This would enable all parties to respond to the new rule.

Advance rulings issued by the Chief Electoral Officer would be binding on him and on the commissioner of elections. In the interest of consistency and transparency, the Chief Electoral Officer would maintain an online registry, available to the public, of the complete text of final guidelines and interpretation notes, as well as of the written opinions containing advance rulings that have been issued.

This system would be far superior to what is currently in place, because currently political parties and campaigns can only guess at how their actions might be interpreted.

I would also point out that under the fair elections act, a mechanism would be put in place whereby the Chief Electoral Officer and the representatives of registered political parties would have a forum to help guide such interpretations. The forum is not new, but it would be put to better use.

The Advisory Committee of Political Parties was established to share information, to foster good working relations, to consult on legislative changes, and to resolve administrative issues.

● (1750)

Looking back at the reports of the Chief Electoral Officer following each general election, one finds a quick summary of the advisory committee's work. In the report on the 40th election in 2008, we learn that advisory committee members were generally satisfied with Elections Canada's services and the overall administration of the election, but there was discussion on candidate debates, the candidate nomination process, and voter identification. In the report on the 2011 general election, the advisory committee discussed the effectiveness of Elections Canada's information services. We think the practical knowledge that the advisory committee members have can assist in crafting future guidelines, interpretations, and advance rulings.

Under the fair elections act, the Chief Electoral Officer would turn to the advisory committee for guidance and advice on interpretation notes. The committee would have 15 days to weigh in and determine whether it thinks the guideline is fair. The Chief Electoral Officer and the parties can help ensure that the rules are clear and fair.

While the advice of the advisory committee is not binding on the Chief Electoral Officer, it should help to ensure that future rules are informed by the realities that political parties face.

The changes that I have referred to thus far in my speech deal with matters that most Canadians may not know about, but they are very important. They make the rules clearer and help prevent the

unintentional breaking of the rules. They are, I would suggest, of vital interest to all members of the House, and I certainly trust that we will have them in place in time for the next election.

The second element that I would like to discuss today is the provision in the bill that would require voters to prove their identities when voting. This is clearly something that the vast majority of Canadians wholeheartedly support. They understand it is a very reasonable requirement that people should be able to prove their identities when voting. In fact, in a recent poll, 87% of Canadians indicated that was something they believed was a very reasonable thing that they supported. I can confirm that from anecdotal evidence and through conversations I have had with constituents and other Canadians. It is something that many people feel quite strongly is an important part of ensuring a fair democracy.

I would note that during the committee process there was a lot of discussion regarding those particular provisions. There were some amendments made in relation to voter identification aspects. As it currently sits, there are 39 different forms of ID that can be used to prove one's identity when voting, and there are 13 pieces of ID, besides one's driver's licence, that can be used to prove people's addresses.

Obviously those are very important changes. In committee, there were some amendments made in order to provide for any potential concerns, but we are still very much requiring that people be able to prove their identities when voting. There is provision for a written co-signed oath, signed by both the elector and another elector who is able to produce the proper identification, in order to swear to an elector's residence for those who may not have their residential addresses on their identification. That would ensure compliance with the rules and ensure that people can verify who they are in order to vote.

The committee heard many times from the opposition about hypothetical voters who would not be able to vote with these changes. I would note that during the committee process, every time I heard about one of these hypothetical voters, I would think about it. I do not have time in my remarks, but hopefully I will get a chance in the questions to go through what those hypothetical voters could do to prove their residences and identities. In all cases, I was able to come up with a solution that would allow someone to vote in that hypothetical situation.

One thing I did note is that at no time during the committee hearings, and there were very extensive hearings, did I hear any one person say he or she would not be able to vote should these changes be put in place, nor did I ever hear anyone say that he or she knew of anyone who would not be able to vote.

● (1755)

It is quite clear to me that there is full support for those changes. What it will do is ensure the sanctity of the election process and ensure that all Canadians are eligible to vote who are in fact eligible to vote.

I look forward to questions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Government Orders

I will ask him one very specific question. I feel like asking him two questions, but when you ask more than one, you often get no answer at all because it is too complicated. I will therefore ask him just one, very specific question.

The hon. member is a member of the committee. He therefore studied the bill. Let us come back to one amendment in particular, which still gets to me. My colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent also mentioned it a few times.

This amendment was on the voter information card, which can no longer be used as ID at the polling station. As we were unable to keep the amendment in question, we tried to propose an amendment that would add information to the voter card making it very clear that it can no longer be used as identification at the polling station. Otherwise, this might cause problems for people who are unaware of this change and for years have been voting with this card that they suddenly can no longer use from one election to the next.

Why did the Conservatives reject this very sensible amendment? Since my question is very specific, I hope to get a specific answer.

• (1800)

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to provide a specific answer to his question. However, I will point out first of all that he should get his facts straight when asking a question. From listening to the preface to his question, the member was misinformed in terms of what the facts actually are.

The voter information card is not an identification card. It is an information card. It has never been a piece of identification. In the last election, on a test basis, it was something that was allowed.

It has never been one of the 39 forms of identification that are acceptable. In fact, what I can confirm to the member is that there are 39 forms that continue to exist to prove one's identity.

I can also confirm to the member that during the committee hearings and committee discussion, we did, in fact, make some amendments to the provisions about voter identification to ensure that where people are able to prove their identity, which is very important, because people must be able to prove who they are to vote, they are able to co-sign an oath with another elector who can confirm their residence. This would be in instances where the residential address does not appear on their identification. People would be able to use that process prove their residence.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note that my colleague who just spoke spent many hours on the committee. I was wondering if the member could speak to a question that has come up in the House many times about there being no sort of consultation on this bill.

Knowing that the member spent dozens of hours on this committee, could he speak to the committee study? Who was consulted, who came in front of the committee, and how was the amendment process undertaken?

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I can confirm that the committee did in fact have dozens and dozens of hours of testimony.

We had a very significant and detailed debate about the legislation over quite a period of time. We were able to look at a number of different suggestions that were given to us. We heard from the Chief Electoral Officer, past chief electoral officers, and many other electoral officers across the country. We heard from many academics and Canadians of all types who were there to express their thoughts on our election law, a very important subject.

We were very appreciative of all the testimony we heard. We were able to make a number of amendments that I think make a great bill even better.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak close to the end, if not the merciful end, of this debate. This has been a long and contentious bill, and we are about to enter into a marathon voting session as various motions and amendments are put forward at the end of this debate.

I have one piece of advice for the government, which of course, it is not going to accept, but that is another thing altogether. It is that the Conservatives could have saved themselves a lot of grief had they introduced this bill or a form of this bill at first reading and then sent it off to the committee, because of the unique nature of this bill. This is not a government bill. This is not a party bill. This is not an opposition bill. This is a bill for the people of Canada, and it should have been presented as a first-reading bill to the people of Canada and sent off to committee.

Then we would not have had this gong show that has been going on for the last six weeks, where we had the Minister of State for Democratic Reform going through this process of pretty well ridiculing anyone who had anything to say about our democracy in this country, starting with the Chief Electoral Officer, who was accused of wearing the team sweater; the former chief electoral officer; and all the commissioners, both current and former commissioners. Throw in the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, for goodness' sake, just as an attack diversion, then go back to Justice Gomery, then go on to various other officers of Parliament.

It seems to be the *modus operandi* of the Conservative government to attack everyone and everything, no matter how significant the institution, no matter how important their dedication and their service to this country, if they are not marching to the drummer put forward by the current government.

As I say, we probably could have saved ourselves, and the government probably could have saved itself, a lot of hits to its credibility had the Conservatives introduced this bill at first reading and put it before the committee. Then it could have been legitimately argued that they were consulting the people of Canada and the people who represent the interests of Canadians and that their voting system, not the party's voting system, not the government's voting system, not the opposition party's voting system, but the Canadians' voting system, is as fair as it can possibly be.

Speaker's Ruling

The government has taken a huge hit on its credibility, because there is an enormous suspicion that this bill is loaded in favour of the government party. That suspicion, once it set in, took on the force of almost being set in stone. It did not really matter how many amendments, the character of the amendments, or the quality of the amendments that were eventually passed by the government members on the committee. It did not matter. There was a fierce sense that this bill was flawed from the beginning, that it was stacked in favour of the Conservative Party, and that Canadians actually did not get a real say.

When they attack the various people who act as our institutional bulwark against bias in our electoral system, they set up a result that is entirely predictable. The result is that at the end of our time of voting here tonight, there will be a deep-set belief among the people of Canada that the Conservative Party has stacked the system in its own favour. That is ultimately very regrettable.

They could simply have made it so that the Chief Electoral Officer reports here, not through the director of prosecutions. It would be a very simple thing to do. However, the perception of unfairness and the perception of bias is loaded into the system when they create that procedural inequity. It is hard to see how a Chief Electoral Officer is going to be representing what he or she perceives to be the best interests of the Canadian public when he or she has to go to the justice minister, who is a member of a particular party, in order to initiate a particular prosecution. I do not know what the analogy is, but it does not seem to be fair, and it simply does not pass the sniff test.

● (1805)

With respect to the opportunity to report the commission's activities, instead of reporting the commission's activities to the people of Canada through the Parliament of Canada, it will now report through the Government of Canada. The issue is not so much that it is this government or any other government; it is that the people of Canada are entitled to that level of objectivity and neutrality.

I know that there has been a lot of discussion about vouching, and in some respects, it is going to take on a life of its own. There have been endless numbers of question periods devoted to the issue of vouching. What is it that is really at the core? In the greater scheme of things, it is not a lot of voters, but at the core of that issue is the sense that each and every Canadian citizen is entitled to vote. Unfortunately, not all citizens are created equal as far as their ability to identify themselves at the relevant period of time. Some, frankly, do not have documentation that would be acceptable in many circumstances. It speaks to the core issue that each and every Canadian citizen is equal before the law, and because he or she is equal before the law, the person is absolutely entitled to vote and the system needs to bend over backwards to assure itself that this person is in fact a Canadian citizen.

We have a whole variety of issues, almost all of which could have been dealt with by the introduction of the bill at first reading. It could have been dealt with in a fashion that was not only fair but that was perceived to be fair. That is the issue here. The bill may actually have some merit, but at this point of the debate, prior to the vote, there is a deep-seated view that the merits are stacked in favour of the

government party. Once that perception sets in, it is almost game over as far as the faith Canadians have in the fairness and equity of their electoral democracy.

As we are about to launch into our voting period, I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time and attention.

* * *

● (1810)

POINTS OF ORDER

GROUPING OF AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-23—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: Before we move on to questions and comments, if there is time, I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised earlier today by the hon. House leader of the official opposition regarding the voting pattern for motions in amendment for Bill C-23, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts.

I would like to thank the hon. opposition House leader for raising this matter, as well the government leader in the House for his comments.

The hon. opposition House leader objected to the way in which the Chair proposes to apply the results of votes taken on motions to delete clauses. The hon. member pointed out that members of his party had proposed 110 such motions in relation to this bill and that other members had also submitted some of the same motions, as well as others. He argued that each motion constituted a distinct question and that members should have the fundamental right to pronounce themselves on each question separately. By applying the result of a vote on one motion to a large number of other motions, he feared that the Chair would force members to vote against clauses they in fact support or vote in favour of clauses they oppose.

[*Translation*]

In response, the government House leader said that the grouping of votes is in keeping with the recent precedent and that it is not unusual for the results of the vote to be applied in this manner.

[*English*]

The Chair takes seriously its responsibility to select and group motions for debate at report stage. It is often challenging to arrive at a grouping and a voting pattern that all members will find satisfactory, and this is particularly true in cases where there are a large number of motions proposed.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, second edition, at page 307, states that it is the duty of the Speaker:

...to ensure that public business is transacted efficiently and that the interests of all parts of the House are advocated and protected against the use of arbitrary authority. It is in this spirit that the Speaker, as the chief servant of the House, applies the rules. The Speaker is the servant, neither of any part of the House nor of any majority in the House, but of the entire institution and serves the best interests of the House...

Government Orders

[Translation]

The hon. House leader of the official opposition is asking that each motion be voted on separately. A similar argument was made by his predecessor in 2012 with respect to Bill C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures. In the decision of November 29, 2012, found on page 12,611 of the *Debates*, I reminded the House that:

This would diverge from our practice where, for voting purposes where appropriate, a long series of motions to delete are grouped for a vote. Since the effect of deleting a clause at report stage is, for all practical purposes, the same as negating a clause in committee, to change our practice to a one deletion, one vote approach could be seen as a repetition of the clause by clause consideration of the bill in committee, something which the House is specifically enjoined against in the notes to Standing Orders 76(5) and 76.1(5) which state that the report stage is not meant to be a reconsideration of the committee stage.

• (1815)

[English]

The Chair acknowledges that each clause in a bill represents a unique question. That said, it is also clear that our rules and practices foresee circumstances in which the Speaker combines several different questions in a single group for debate and where the vote on one question is applied to others. This is done so that the time of the House is used efficiently and so that the House does not repeat at report stage the work done by the committee that considered the bill.

In the case before us, the Chair has grouped all of the motions to delete proposed by a party or by a member into a single vote. I believe this is in keeping with recent precedents where there are large numbers of motions at report stage.

In fact, to do as the opposition House leader has suggested would be a marked departure from our practices, would be contrary to the very clear direction included in the notes to Standing Orders 76(5) and 76.1(5), and is not something the Chair is prepared to entertain since, as all members know, we are not here to repeat committee stage.

Absent any other direction from the House, I intend to follow those precedents and to maintain the voting pattern I proposed to the House when I rendered my decision last week. I thank the hon. member for having raised this important matter.

* * *

FAIR ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-23, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts and to make consequential amendments to certain acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: It being 6:16 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Thursday, May 8, 2014, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A negative vote on Motion No. 1 requires the question to be put on Motions Nos. 4, 7, 12, 13, 36, 74 and 138.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 14 to 21, 24, 27, 30 to 35, 37, 39 to 44, 50 to 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 64 to 73, 75 to 85, 88, 89, 91, 96 to 99, 101 to 137, and 139 to 145.

The next question is on the Motion No. 5. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

I declare the Motion No. 5 defeated. Motions Nos. 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, and 45 are also defeated.

The next question is on Motion No. 9. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Government Orders

●(1820)

The question is on Motion No. 28. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred and the recorded division will also apply to Motion 38.

The question is on Motion No. 46. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division stands deferred.

The question is on Motion No. 47. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The question is on Motion No. 48. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The question is on Motion No. 49. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

●(1840)

The Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 14 to 21, 24, 27, 30 to 35, 37, 39 to 44, 50 to 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 64 to 73, 75 to 85, 88, 89, 91, 96 to 99, 101 to 137, and 139 to 145.

[*Translation*]

A negative vote on Motion No. 1 requires the question to be put on Motions Nos. 4, 7, 12, 13, 36, 74 and 138.

●(1850)

[*English*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 122)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélangier	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brison
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Freeland	Freeman
Fry	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hyer
Jacob	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Péclet	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Rathgeber	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis	Stewart
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Turnel
Valeriote — 123	

NAYS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergem	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney

Government Orders

Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Poilievre
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Toet
Trost	Trotter
Truppe	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 148

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.*[Translation]*

I declare Motions Nos. 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 14 to 21, 24, 27, 30 to 35, 37, 39 to 44, 50 to 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 64 to 73, 75 to 85, 88, 89, 91, 96 to 99, 101 to 137 and 139 to 145 defeated as well.

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 4.

Government Orders

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 123*)

YEAS

Members

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

Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Rathgeber
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Sullivan
Thibeault	Toone
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriote— 123	

NAYS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Poillievre
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Toet	Trost

Government Orders

Trottier
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer— 149

Truppe
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

Goodale
Grogulé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hyer
Julian
Lamoureux
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Pilon
Rafferty
Rathgeber
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Sullivan
Toone
Turmel

Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Jacob
Kellway
Lapointe
Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray
Nicholls
Pacetti
Pécelet
Quach
Rankin
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Thibeault
Trudeau
Valeriote— 122

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 4 defeated.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 7. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 8.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1905)

(The House divided on Motion No. 7, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 124*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Ashton
Aubin
Bélanger
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Casey
Charlton
Chisholm
Christopherson
Côté
Crowder
Cuzner
Day
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Freeman
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain

Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brisson
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Choquette
Cleary
Cotler
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Freeland
Fry
Genest
Giguère

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke
Crockatt
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lukivski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire

NAYS

Members

Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Ashfield
Baird
Benoit
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chong
Clement
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Falk
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
James
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lauzon
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes

Government Orders

McColeman	McLeod	Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Menegakis	Merrifield	Dubé	Dubourg
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Nicholson	Norlock	Dusseau	Easter
Obhrai	O'Connor	Eyking	Freeland
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon	Freeman	Fry
Opitz	O'Toole	Garrison	Genest
Paradis	Payne	Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Poilievre	Preston	Goodale	Gravelle
Rajotte	Reid	Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Rempel	Richards	Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Rickford	Ritz	Hyer	Jacob
Saxton	Schellenberger	Julian	Kellway
Seeback	Shea	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Shiple	Shory	Larose	Latendresse
Smith	Sopuck	Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Sorenson	Stanton	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Storseth	Strahl	Liu	MacAulay
Sweet	Toet	Mai	Marston
Trost	Trottier	Martin	Masse
Truppe	Uppal	May	McCallum
Valcourt	Van Kesteren	McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Van Loan	Vellacott	Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Wallace	Warawa	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Warkentin	Watson	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)		Mulcair	Murray
Weston (Saint John)		Nantel	Nicholls
Wilks	Williamson	Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Wong	Woodworth	Papillon	Péclet
Yelich	Young (Oakville)	Pilon	Plamondon
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer— 148	Quach	Rafferty
		Rankin	Rathgeber
		Ravignat	Raynault
		Regan	Rousseau
		Saganash	Sandhu
		Scarpaleggia	Scott
		Sellah	Sgro
		Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
		Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
		Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
		Stewart	Sullivan
		Thibeault	Toone
		Trudeau	Turmel
		Valeriote— 123	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 7 defeated. I therefore declare Motion No. 8 defeated.

The next question is on Motion No. 12. All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

• (1915)

(The House divided on Motion No. 12, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 125)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélangier	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brisson
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James

NAYS

Members

Government Orders

Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission) Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Kerr Komarnicki
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings) Lauzon
 Lebel Leef
 Leitch Lemieux
 Leung Lizon
 Lukiwski Lunney
 MacKay (Central Nova) MacKenzie
 Maguire Mayes
 McColeman McLeod
 Menegakis Merrifield
 Miller Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Nicholson Norlock
 Obhrai O'Connor
 Oliver O'Neill Gordon
 Opitz O'Toole
 Paradis Payne
 Poilievre Preston
 Rajotte Reid
 Rempel Richards
 Rickford Ritz
 Saxton Schellenberger
 Seeback Shea
 Shipley Shory
 Smith Sopuck
 Sorenson Stanton
 Storseth Strahl
 Sweet Toet
 Trost Trottier
 Truppe Uppal
 Valcourt Van Kesteren
 Van Loan Vellacott
 Wallace Warawa
 Warkentin Watson
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong Williamson
 Yelich Woodworth
 Young (Vancouver South) Young (Oakville)
 Zimmer — 148

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 12 defeated.

The next question is on Motion No. 13. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

● (1920)

(The House divided on Motion No. 13, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 126)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Ashton
 Aubin

Angus
 Atamanenko
 Ayala

Bélanger
 Benskin
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boulterice
 Brahmi
 Brosseau
 Casey
 Charlton
 Chisholm
 Christopherson
 Côté
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Day
 Dion
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Eyking
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Goodale
 Groguhé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hyer
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Larose
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 May
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Papillon
 Pilon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Saganash
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Thibeault
 Trudeau
 Valerioté — 123

Bennett
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brison
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Choquette
 Cleary
 Cotler
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter
 Freeland
 Fry
 Genest
 Giguère
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hsu
 Jacob
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Masse
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Murray
 Nicholls
 Pacetti
 Péclet
 Plamondon
 Rafferty
 Rathgeber
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Sandhu
 Scott
 Sgro
 St-Denis
 Sullivan
 Toone
 Turmel

NAYS

Members

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Brown (Barrie)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Ashfield
 Baird
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Breitreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement

Government Orders

Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poilievre	Preston
Rajotte	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 148

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 13 defeated.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 36. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

● (1930)

(The House divided on Motion No. 36, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 127*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélangier	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brison
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Grogg
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hyer
Jacob	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Murray	McCallum
Nicholls	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Pacetti	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Péclet	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Plamondon	Mulcair
Rafferty	Nantel
Ravignat	Nunez-Melo
Regan	Papillon
Saganash	Pilon
Scarpaleggia	Quach
Sellah	Rankin
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	Raynault
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Rousseau
Sitsabaiesan	Sandhu
Stewart	Scott
Thibeault	Sgro
Trudeau	St-Denis
Valériote — 121	Sullivan
	Toone
	Tumel

NAYS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler

Government Orders

Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooog
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayer	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	Obhrai
Norlock	Oliver
O'Connor	Opitz
O'Neill Gordon	Paradis
O'Toole	Poillievre
Payne	Rajotte
Preston	Reid
Rathgeber	Richards
Rempel	Ritz
Rickford	Schellenberger
Saxton	Shea
Seeback	Shory
Shipley	Sopuck
Smith	Stanton
Sorenson	Strahl
Storseth	Toet
Sweet	Trottier
Trost	Uppal
Truppe	Van Kesteren
Valcourt	Vellacott
Van Loan	Warawa
Wallace	Watson
Warkentin	
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Williamson
Wilks	Woodworth
Wong	Young (Oakville)
Yelich	Zimmer — 150
Young (Vancouver South)	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 36 defeated.

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 74. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

• (1935)

(The House divided on Motion No. 74, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 128)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélangier	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brison
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hyer
Jacob	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Péclet
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Rathgeber
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau

Government Orders

Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Thibeault
Trudeau
Valeriote — 123

Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
St-Denis
Sullivan
Toone
Turmel

Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 149

Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 74 defeated.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 138. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

• (1945)

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

(*Division No. 129*)

YEAS

Members

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke
Crockatt
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dreeschen
Dykstra
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
James
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lauzon
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
McLeod
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Nicholson
Norlock
O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Payne
Preston
Reid
Richards
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Toet
Trottier
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott

Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Ashfield
Baird
Benoit
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chong
Clement
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Falk
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McColeman
Menegakis
Miller
Obhrai
Oliver
Opitz
Paradis
Poilievre
Rajotte
Rempel
Rickford
Saxton
Seeback
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Trost
Truppe
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace

Allen (Welland)
Ashton
Aubin
Bélanger
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Casey
Charlton
Chisholm
Christopherson
Côté
Crowder
Cuzner
Day
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseau
Eyking
Freeman
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Jacob
Kellway

Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brisson
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Choquette
Cleary
Cotler
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Freeland
Fry
Genest
Giguère
Goodale
Groguhé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hyer
Julian
Lamoureux

Government Orders

Lapointe
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Masse
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Murray
 Nicholls
 Pacetti
 Pécllet
 Quach
 Rankin
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Sandhu
 Scott
 Sgro
 (sor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 St-Denis
 Sullivan
 Toone
 Turmel

Larose
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 May
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Papillon
 Pilon
 Rafferty
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Saganash
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
 sor)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Thibeault
 Trudeau
 Valeriote — 122

O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 O'Toole
 Payne
 Preston
 Rathgeber
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Trost
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)

Oliver
 Opitz
 Paradis
 Poilievre
 Rajotte
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Toet
 Trottier
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Zimmer — 150

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 138 defeated.

[*English*]

The question is on Motion No. 9.

● (1955)

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

(*Division No. 130*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Benskin
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boulerice
 Brahmi
 Brosseau
 Casey
 Charlton
 Chisholm
 Christopherson
 Côté
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Day
 Dion
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Eyking
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hsu
 Jacob
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)

Angus
 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bennett
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Boutin-Sweet
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Choquette
 Cleary
 Cotler
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter
 Freeland
 Fry
 Genest
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Groguhé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hyer
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Larose
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)

NAYS

Members

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Brown (Barrie)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Del Mastro
 Dreeshen
 Dykstra
 Fantino
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Harper
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 James
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Komarnicki
 Lauzon
 Leef
 Lemieux
 Lizon
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Merrifield
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Nicholson
 Norlock

Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Ashfield
 Baird
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Breitzkreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Falk
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Gosal
 Grewal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Miller
 Obhrai

Government Orders

Leslie	Liu	O'Toole	Paradis
MacAulay	Mai	Payne	Poilievre
Marston	Martin	Preston	Rajotte
Masse	May	Reid	Rempel
McCallum	McGuinty	Richards	Rickford
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud	Ritz	Saxton
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Schellenberger	Seeback
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Shea	Shipley
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair	Shory	Smith
Murray	Nantel	Sopuck	Sorenson
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo	Stanton	Storseth
Pacetti	Papillon	Strahl	Sweet
Péclet	Pilon	Toet	Trost
Plamondon	Quach	Trottier	Truppe
Rafferty	Rankin	Uppal	Valcourt
Rathgeber	Ravignat	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Raynault	Regan	Vellacott	Wallace
Rousseau	Saganash	Warawa	Warkentin
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia	Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Scott	Sellah	Sky Country)	Wilks
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-	Weston (Saint John)	Wong
sor)	Sitsabaiesan	Williamson	Yelich
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Stewart	Woodworth	Young (Vancouver South)
St-Denis	Thibeault	Young (Oakville)	
Sullivan	Trudeau	Zimmer — 149	
Toone	Valerioté — 124		
Turmel			

NAYS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz

Nil

PAIRED**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 9 defeated.

[Translation]

The next question is on Motion No. 28. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 38.

● (2000)

[English]

[Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, in a desperate effort to have any chance to speak to my amendment, I have accidentally voted against my own amendment to ensure we do not have Sunday voting in advance polls. The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North and I wish to record our votes as in support of this amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: That is acceptable.

[Translation]

(The House divided on Motion No. 28, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 131)***YEAS**

Members

Hyer
Rathgeber — 3

May

NAYS

Members

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Angus
Ashton
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bateman
Bennett
BenskinAglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Welland)
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Ashfield
Aspin
Aubin
Baird
Bélanger
Benoit
Bergen

Government Orders

Bernier	Bevington	Opitz	O'Toole
Bezan	Blanchette	Pacetti	Papillon
Blanchette-Lamothe	Blaney	Paradis	Payne
Bloch	Boivin	Péclét	Pilon
Borg	Boughen	Poilievre	Preston
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet	Quach	Rafferty
Brahmi	Braid	Rajotte	Rankin
Brison	Brosseau	Ravignat	Raynault
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Regan	Reid
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge	Rempel	Richards
Butt	Calandra	Rickford	Ritz
Calkins	Cannan	Rousseau	Saganash
Carmichael	Caron	Sandhu	Saxton
Carrie	Casey	Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Cash	Charlton	Scott	Seeback
Chicoine	Chisholm	Sellah	Sgro
Chisu	Chong	Shea	Shipley
Choquette	Christopherson	Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Clarke	Cleary	sor)	
Clement	Côté	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Cotler	Crockatt	Smith	Sopuck
Crowder	Cullen	Sorenson	Stanton
Cuzner	Daniel	St-Denis	Stewart
Davidson	Davies (Vancouver East)	Storseth	Strahl
Day	Dechert	Sullivan	Sweet
Del Mastro	Devolin	Thibeault	Toet
Dewar	Dion	Toone	Trost
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly	Trottier	Trudeau
Doré Lefebvre	Dreeshen	Truppe	Turmel
Dubé	Dubourg	Uppal	Valcourt
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Valeriotte	Van Kesteren
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault	Van Loan	Vellacott
Dykstra	Easter	Wallace	Warawa
Eyking	Falk	Warkentin	Watson
Fantino	Fast	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Weston (Saint John)	
Fletcher	Freeland	Wilks	Williamson
Freeman	Fry	Wong	Woodworth
Galipeau	Gallant	Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Garrison	Genest	Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 268
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère		
Gill	Glover		
Godin	Goguen		
Goodale	Goodyear		
Gosal	Gourde		
Gravelle	Grewal		
Groguhé	Harper		
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)		
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn		
Hayes	Hiebert		
Hillyer	Hoback		
Holder	Hsu		
Jacob	James		
Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)		
Kellway	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)		
Kerr	Komarnicki		
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lamoureux		
Lapointe	Larose		
Latendresse	Lauzon		
Laverdière	Lebel		
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)		
Leef	Leitch		
Lemieux	Leslie		
Leung	Liu		
Lizon	Lukiwski		
Lunney	MacAulay		
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie		
Maguire	Mai		
Marston	Martin		
Masse	Mayes		
McCallum	McColeman		
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)		
McLeod	Menegakis		
Merrifield	Michaud		
Miller	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)		
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)			
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)			
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)		
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair		
Murray	Nantel		
Nicholls	Nicholson		
Norlock	Nunez-Melo		
Obhrai	O'Connor		
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon		
		Allen (Welland)	Angus
		Ashton	Atamanenko
		Aubin	Ayala
		Bélanger	Bennett
		Benskin	Bevington
		Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
		Boivin	Borg
		Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
		Brahmi	Brison
		Brosseau	Caron
		Casey	Cash
		Charlton	Chicoine
		Chisholm	Choquette
		Christopherson	Cleary
		Côté	Cotler
		Crowder	Cullen
		Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
		Day	Dewar
		Dion	Dionne Labelle
		Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 28 defeated.

I therefore declare Motion No. 38 defeated.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 46.

● (2010)

(The House divided on Motion No. 46, which was negated to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 132*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélanger	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brison
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre

Government Orders

Dubé	Dubourg	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Dusseau	Easter	Lauzon	Lebel
Eyking	Freeland	Leaf	Leitch
Freeman	Fry	Lemieux	Leung
Garrison	Genest	Lizon	Lukiwski
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère	Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Godin	Goodale	MacKenzie	Maguire
Gravelle	Groguhé	Mayes	McColeman
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)	McLeod	Menegakis
Hsu	Hyer	Merrifield	Miller
Jacob	Julian	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Kellway	Lamoureux	Nicholson	Obhrai
Lapointe	Larose	Norlock	Oliver
Latendresse	Laverdière	O'Connor	Opitz
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	O'Neill Gordon	Paradis
Leslie	Liu	O'Toole	Poilevre
MacAulay	Mai	Payne	Rajotte
Marston	Martin	Preston	Rempel
Masse	May	Reid	Rickford
McCallum	McGuinty	Richards	Saxton
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud	Ritz	Seeback
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Schellenberger	Shipley
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Shea	Smith
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair	Shory	Sorenson
Murray	Nantel	Sopuck	Storseth
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo	Stanton	Sweet
Pacetti	Papillon	Strahl	Trost
Péclét	Pilon	Toet	Truppe
Plamondon	Quach	Trottier	Valcourt
Rafferty	Rankin	Uppal	Van Loan
Rathgeber	Ravignat	Van Kesteren	Wallace
Raynault	Regan	Vellacott	Warkentin
Rousseau	Sagamash	Warawa	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia	Watson	
Scott	Sellah	Sky Country)	Wilks
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-	Weston (Saint John)	Wong
sor)		Williamson	Yelich
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan	Woodworth	Young (Vancouver South)
St-Denis	Stewart	Young (Oakville)	
Sullivan	Thibeault	Zimmer — 149	
Toone	Trudeau		
Tumel	Valerioté — 124		

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 46 defeated.

[Translation]

The next question is on Motion No. 47.

● (2015)

(The House divided on Motion No. 47, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 133)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq	Allen (Welland)	Angus
Albas	Albrecht	Ashton	Atamanenko
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Aubin	Ayala
Allison	Ambler	Bélangier	Bennett
Ambrose	Anders	Benskin	Bevington
Anderson	Ashfield	Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Aspin	Baird	Boivin	Borg
Bateman	Benoit	Boutlerice	Boutin-Sweet
Bergen	Bernier	Brahmi	Brousseau
Bezan	Blaney	Caron	Casey
Block	Boughen	Cash	Charlton
Braid	Breitkreuz	Chicoine	Chisholm
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Choquette	Christopherson
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge	Cleary	Côté
Butt	Calandra	Cotler	Crowder
Calkins	Cannan	Cullen	Cuzner
Carmichael	Carrie	Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Chisu	Chong	Dewar	Dion
Clarke	Clement	Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Crockatt	Daniel	Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Davidson	Dechert	Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Del Mastro	Devolin		
Dreeschen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)		
Dykstra	Falk		
Fantino	Fast		
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)		
Fletcher	Galipeau		
Gallant	Gill		
Glover	Goguen		
Goodyear	Gosal		
Gourde	Grewal		
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)		
Hawn	Hayes		
Hiebert	Hillyer		
Hoback	Holder		
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)		

Government Orders

Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter
 Freeland
 Fry
 Genest
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Groguhé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hyer
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Larose
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 May
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Papillon
 Pilon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Saganash
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Thibeault
 Trudeau
 Valeriote — 123

Dusseault
 Eyking
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hsu
 Jacob
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Masse
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Murray
 Nicholls
 Pacetti
 Péclet
 Plamondon
 Rafferty
 Rathgeber
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Sandhu
 Scott
 Sgro
 St-Denis
 Sullivan
 Toone
 Turmel

Komarnicki
 Lauzon
 Leaf
 Lemieux
 Lizon
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Merrifield
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Nicholson
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 O'Toole
 Payne
 Preston
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Toet
 Trotter
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Zimmer — 149

Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Miller
 Obhrai
 Oliver
 Opitz
 Paradis
 Poilievre
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Trost
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
 Skye)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Brown (Barrie)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Del Mastro
 Dreeshen
 Dykstra
 Fantino
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Harper
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 James
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)

Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Ashfield
 Baird
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Breitreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Falk
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Gosal
 Grewal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kerr

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 47 defeated.

[English]

Now the question is on Motion No. 48.

● (2025)

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

(Division No. 134)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Benskin
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boulerice
 Brahma
 Brosseau
 Casey
 Charlton
 Chisholm
 Christopherson
 Côté
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Day
 Dion
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault

Angus
 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bennett
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brison
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Choquette
 Cleary
 Cotler
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter

Government Orders

Eyking	Freeland	Leef	Leitch
Freeman	Fry	Lemieux	Leung
Garrison	Genest	Lizon	Lukivski
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère	Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Godin	Goodale	MacKenzie	Maguire
Gravelle	Groguhé	Mayes	McColeman
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)	McLeod	Menegakis
Hsu	Hyer	Merrifield	Miller
Jacob	Julian	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Kellway	Lamoureux	Nicholson	
Lapointe	Larose	Norlock	Obhrai
Latendresse	Laverdière	O'Connor	Oliver
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
Leslie	Liu	O'Toole	Paradis
MacAulay	Mai	Payne	Poilievre
Marston	Martin	Preston	Rajotte
Masse	May	Reid	Rempel
McCallum	McGuinty	Richards	Rickford
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud	Ritz	Saxton
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Schellenberger	Seeback
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Shea	Shipleigh
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair	Shory	Smith
Murray	Nantel	Sopuck	Sorenson
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo	Stanton	Storseth
Pacetti	Papillon	Strahl	Sweet
Péclet	Pilon	Toet	Trost
Plamondon	Quach	Trottier	Truppe
Rafferty	Rankin	Uppal	Valcourt
Rathgeber	Ravignat	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Raynault	Regan	Wallace	Warawa
Rousseau	Saganash	Warkentin	Watson
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Scott	Sellah	Weston (Saint John)	
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	Wilks	Williamson
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaesan	Wong	Woodworth
St-Denis	Stewart	Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Sullivan	Thibeault	Zimmer — 147	
Toone	Trudeau		
Turnel	Valeriote — 124		

NAYS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon	Lebel

Nil

PAIRED

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 48 defeated.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 49.

● (2030)

(The House divided on Motion No. 49, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 135*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélanger	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brisson
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest

Government Orders

Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hsu
 Jacob
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Masse
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Murray
 Nicholls
 Pacetti
 Péclet
 Plamondon
 Rafferty
 Rathgeber
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Sandhu
 Scott
 Sgro
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 St-Denis
 Sullivan
 Toone
 Turnel

Giguère
 Goodale
 Grogulé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hyer
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Larose
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 May
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Papillon
 Pilon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Ravnignat
 Regan
 Saganash
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sitsabaesan
 Stewart
 Thibeault
 Trudeau
 Valeriote — 124

Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Merrifield
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Nicholson
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 O'Toole
 Payne
 Preston
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Toet
 Trotter
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Sky Country
 Weston (Saint John)
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Vancouver South)
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Miller
 Obhrai
 Oliver
 Opitz
 Paradis
 Poilievre
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Trost
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Young (Oakville)
 Zimmer — 148

NAYS

Members

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Brown (Barrie)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Del Mastro
 Dreeschen
 Dykstra
 Fantino
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Harper
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 James
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Komarnicki
 Lauzon
 Leef
 Lemieux
 Lizon

Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Ashfield
 Baird
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Breitreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Falk
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Gosal
 Grewal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lukiwski

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 49 defeated.

● (2035)

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in at report stage with further amendments.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

[*And five or more members having risen:*]

● (2040)

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

*Government Orders**(Division No. 136)*

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Poilievre
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 148

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélanger	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brison
Brosseau	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	East
Eyking	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hyer
Jacob	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Péclet	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Rathgeber	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis	Stewart
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Trudeau
Turnel	Valeriote — 124

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

OFFSHORE HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT

The House resumed from May 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Canada-Newfoundland Atlantic Accord Implementation Act, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and other Acts and to provide for certain other measures, be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-5.

• (2050)

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

(Division No. 137)

YEAS

Members

Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Welland)
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Angus	Ashfield
Ashton	Aspin
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Baird
Bateman	Bélanger
Bennett	Benoit
Benskin	Bergen
Bernier	Bevington
Bezan	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Blaney
Bloch	Boivin
Borg	Boughen
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Brosseau	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Caron	Carrie
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Chisu
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Cleary	Clement
Côté	Cotler
Crockatt	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Daniel	Davidson
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dreeshen	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Freeland	Freeman
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain

Giguère	Gill
Glover	Godin
Goguen	Goodale
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Groguhé	Harper
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	Hsu
Hyer	Jacob
James	Julian
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Kellway
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Lauzon	Lebel
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leslie
Leung	Liu
Lizon	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	May
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Merrifield
Michaud	Miller
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nicholls
Nicholson	Norlock
Nunez-Melo	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Pacetti
Papillon	Paradis
Payne	Pécelet
Pilon	Poilievre
Preston	Quach
Rafferty	Rajotte
Rankin	Rathgeber
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Scott	Seeback
Sellah	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
St-Denis	Stewart
Storseth	Strahl
Sullivan	Sweet
Thibeault	Toet
Toone	Trost
Trotter	Trudeau
Truppe	Turnel
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriote	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	Williamson
Weston (Saint John)	Woodworth
Wilks	Young (Vancouver South)
Wong	
Young (Oakville)	
Zimmer — 269	

S. O. 52

NAYS

Members

Plamondon— 1

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

EMERGENCY DEBATE

[*English*]

KIDNAPPING OF GIRLS IN NIGERIA

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the kidnapping of girls in Nigeria.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP) moved:

That the House do now adjourn.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

Mr. Speaker, schools should be places where our children can learn, where they can dream big dreams, where girls and boys can discover the world, where imagination and idealism flourish. When those values that we hold and cherish, the idea that children can learn uninterrupted, unmolested, are interfered with, we should be disturbed.

Recently, as members know, and the reason for this emergency debate, the world was shocked when over 300 girls who were simply doing what our kids do every day were kidnapped from that sanctity of idealism, of learning, of a place where we want children to thrive, and they were kidnapped for reasons that have to do with striking terror into communities.

The kidnapping of the 300 girls by Boko Haram militants in northern Nigeria is deeply disturbing. In fact, it is truly horrifying to imagine the terror that these girls have experienced and the awful pain their families are suffering, something that we cannot imagine here in Canada. However, we all agree that we must do everything we possibly can to bring these girls to safety; in fact, to bring back our girls.

When people say that, “our girls”, they say it deliberately, just as I have done. They do it because this is not just about these girls. The kidnapping represents an attack on the institution of education, on the rights of children everywhere. That is why this is an issue for all of us to be seized with. Our response, as Canada and as an international community, should recognize this reality. This is about the future, not just of Nigeria or West Africa, but of our children. We can feel the emotions of the Nigerian parents, just as we feel the emotions of the missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada, because we are all in this together. We should do everything possible to engage our international partners to recover the abducted girls. We should also be doing what we can do to ensure that all girls,

indeed, all children, in Nigeria and elsewhere, have access to education they deserve.

The educational crisis in Nigeria has reached devastating levels. According to Amnesty International, more than 50 schools were attacked in the first seven months in 2013, mostly in the northern Borno state where the latest kidnapping occurred. Beyond the immediate casualties, these attacks create a culture of fear. After 50 students were killed in a September 2013 attack, around 1,000 students fled the campus. The Borno state ministry of education estimated that 15,000 children in the state stopped attending classes between February and May 2013, as a result of those attacks.

Nigeria already has 10 million children out of school, which is the highest number in the world. Almost one of three primary age children is out of school and roughly one of four junior secondary age children is out of school. Nearly 60% of the Nigerian children not able to attend school live in the northern part of the country. Six out of 10 Nigerian children not in school are girls. In other words, we have 10 million in Nigeria not attending school and six million of those are girls who are not attending, 60%, in the northern region, where the abductions took place.

• (2055)

Canada can and must help. We have a part to play. We must play our part. We have excellent human and technological capabilities, and it is good that this capacity has been offered to the Nigerian government by our government. Once our countries reach agreement on the details, we should deploy these resources as efficiently as possible in coordination with the Nigerian government and our international partners, but our ability to assist goes beyond mere logistics. It goes beyond these girls. We must make a long-term global commitment to help ensure the rights of children, and especially girls, are respected globally.

Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Canada and Nigeria are both signatories, gives every child the right to an education. We are legally bound to do everything we can to help these girls. Education is not an option for states, it is an obligation for all states that have signed this treaty. The deprivation of this right through violence is not only a tragedy, it is also a violation of a basic and fundamental right that we hold dear.

There are four things to which Canada should commit in addition to its current pledge of logistical support for the recovery of these girls. First, Canada should carefully monitor the use of the equipment that we have pledged and the broader development of a rescue, recovery, or response plan, in other words. We must ensure that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights, humanitarian law obligations are observed during any recovery operation. This is necessary, not only to protect the girls who have been taken, but to ensure that any such operation does not put other children at risk.

Second, and over the longer term, we should coordinate with regional partners through our co-chairmanship of the Sahel working group in the Global Counterterrorism Forum. This is an important venue for the development of counterterrorism strategy as it relates to the Sahel region, including northern Nigeria.

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President Hollande of France has announced that he will be holding an emergency summit on Boko Haram in Paris next weekend. Given Canada's chairmanship of the Sahel working group and our other contributions to the recovery operation, I hope that Canada will be attending this important conference that has been called by President Hollande.

Canada's counterterrorism capacity building program is another institutional venue for working with international partners to share, monitor, and ensure the best practices are followed, including the utmost respect for international law.

Third, Canada should support the Global Partnership for Education by pledging an increased contribution of at least \$30 million per year for the next four-year funding period. Education is essential to development. An investment in education pays off. We know that. We can lift more children and more families out of poverty if we make this commitment. We know that there are gaps in the funding for global education. If Canada does its part, it can then further the cause by pushing other governments to do so.

What happened was a tragedy. It was fuelled by those who want to take away the basic rights that our children enjoy here in Canada. Part of that fuel is small arms, and a final proposition to the government is to have our country finally sign the Arms Trade Treaty so no longer may the menace of small arms and terrorism go together, that we take that tool away from the terrorists.

Tonight we will debate and exchange ideas. This House will be unified in our collective role to help the girls who were spirited away from the sanctity of what we all value, that is education for all. Let us tonight talk about what Canada's role can be in a positive way, in the short term, the medium term, and the long term.

I began my speech by talking about the idea of education. Next to giving life, it is the most important thing we can do for our children. Education is not a privilege, it is a right for all, and the girls of northern Nigeria deserve it as much as my two sons.

At this point in the debate, let us reflect on our individual, collective, and global responsibility to bring our girls back.

● (2100)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stayed to listen to the beginning of this debate, and I certainly agree with the member's unqualified denunciation of this terrible, unthinkable crime. We all stand in solidarity for the parents who are affected in Nigeria.

I was surprised, however, to hear that the member did not reflect on the nature of the culprits. Boko Haram is not an organization that just appeared three weeks ago with this incident. It is an organization that has been spreading violence and wreaking havoc for years now in northern Nigeria. It is responsible for bombing dozens of churches and murdering thousands of innocent civilians. I would submit that the crime that has occurred with the kidnapping of these girls is every bit as deplorable as the countless murders of innocent civilians, particularly the targeted murders of people based on their

religious faiths. Christians at Christmas and Easter are constantly targeted for bombings by this organization.

Would the member not agree with me that the fundamental issue here is the nature of Boko Haram and, more broadly, the kind of ideology of hateful, violent extremist terrorism, of which it is a particularly poignant manifestation?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, in the first third of my speech, I reflected on what this group has done and what its motivation is. I would be happy to share those comments again with my friend across the way.

Of course, we all deplore it and, of course, these are heinous crimes that have been committed. The question is, what do we do about it? I think we would all agree in the House tonight that we have to have a strong response and a smart response. A part of that, as I laid out in my comments, is the short term, the medium term and the long term.

I look forward to the government continuing to follow up with what has happened in northern Nigeria. We understand that the government has some problems around signing the Arms Trade Treaty. I hope that this really does prompt the government to look at the situation and say, let us take these arms away from the terrorists and let us ratify the Arms Trade Treaty.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would really like to thank my hon. colleague for his work on this file and for his very passionate speech.

Just yesterday, a leading Nigerian rights group demanded that the UN Security Council impose sanctions on the Boko Haram terrorist network who abducted the girls, saying that expressions of concern and condemnation are not enough, and that targeted sanctions would send a strong message.

Could the hon. member comment on the potential nature and effectiveness of possible sanctions, particularly in the face of the presumption that a terrorist network, such as Boko Haram, would already operate below the radar and effectively shield itself from any state-imposed sanctions?

● (2105)

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, it is really important that the United Nations be seized with this, as we all are. Part of what has happened and can happen is listing Boko Haram as a terrorist entity and looking at the funding that it might receive through other channels. Through the UN, there are ways in which it can be listed, which it has, as well as any groups that are supporting it. Of course, we would support that.

However, as I said before, it needs to be a very coordinated approach. That is why it is important for the government. Hopefully it already has plans to attend the conference that President Hollande has brought forward. It is a good idea, for reasons that were mentioned by my colleague. In other words, we have to make sure that we have a coordinated response globally, as well as on the ground.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend the hon. member for bringing this to us in an emergency debate.

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I would like to ask, very specifically, what more Canada can do. I agree entirely that we should be ratifying the small arms treaty and reducing the arms trade, but for these girls now, it feels like a very perilous situation.

I heard the member's comments about the summit next week with President Hollande. Are there specific actions that he believes the Canadian government should be taking that it is not taking now?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, yes. We should build on what has already been asked for, which is the support that the Nigerian government has asked for in terms of surveillance. We could also do what we have done in the past, particularly in Darfur. In fact, we trained Nigerian officials and members of the military and police to conduct surveillance better. We can do that. We did that to train Nigerian forces in the case of Darfur.

That is something that we could bring to the table, to make sure that they are going to conduct this rescue in a responsible manner, one that will not aggravate things even more. We could also finally look at supporting education on the ground, to help those 10 million Nigerian children who, as I said, do not have access to school at all right now.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we rise today in solidarity with the over 200 schoolgirls who, by all accounts, were abducted while they were writing a physics exam. These girls had, we can only hope, a promising future. They represent the future of Africa. We can only imagine the horror they are currently experiencing. Where are they now? What are they going through? I think everyone is deeply concerned about their fate.

We stand in solidarity with these girls, and with those who fortunately managed to escape but who are clearly traumatized by their ordeal. We stand in solidarity with their families and friends, who surely are suffering tremendously and experiencing deep anguish. We stand in solidarity with their families, brothers and sisters. I am thinking especially about their sisters. Not that their brothers are not suffering, because I am sure that they are, but I feel especially for their sisters. We want the several hundred girls who were abducted to come home, we want Canada to help and to continue to lend assistance as the situation evolves, and we want their sisters to go to school.

As my colleague mentioned earlier, we cannot help but think about the Global Partnership for Education, which is doing some amazing and outstanding work. It is set to hold its refinancing conference and has expressed the hope that Canada will substantially increase its contribution to the GPE fund, which makes it possible to provide an education to millions of children around the world. We hope that this happens, considering the young sisters of these unfortunate girls.

However, as was also mentioned earlier, more needs to be done. Schools and education are needed, but this situation needs to be resolved and steps taken to ensure that it does not happen again. Since these tragic events first unfolded, eight more young girls have been abducted. If we want to prevent similar tragedies from happening, there is much we can do. I would first like to quote Malala, who had this to say:

● (2110)

[*English*]

“...if we remain silent then...this will happen more and more and more”.

[*Translation*]

We must speak out. We must stand up and raise our voices. I must admit that I am rather proud to see this Parliament considering this issue and talking about it today.

We must fight against organizations like Boko Haram. The most important thing is that justice be done. There can be no room for impunity. Far too often impunity is the source of the biggest problems and a recipe for a reoccurrence.

We must work on governance, government structures and training. Earlier in his speech, my colleague from Ottawa Centre mentioned, in the context of training, that we should not only send equipment and people immediately, but also help mentor the Nigerian military forces to ensure that the current situation is resolved with the release of all the young girls, without any harm coming to them and without risking an operation that might degenerate and get the young girls in question caught in the crossfire.

There is therefore a lot of technical support, training and assistance that needs to be provided right now. However, in the longer term, we must also think about governance, security systems and the type of support that we can provide to Nigeria, as well as to many other countries, especially the whole of the Sahel.

I would like to reiterate that we hope the current situation will be resolved positively without any of these girls suffering further. To prevent this kind of situation from happening in the future, we must fight with strength and determination for the rights of women and girls. Often when we speak about this issue, we get the impression that we are speaking only about foreign countries and that only developing countries are involved. However, that is not the case. We must fight for the rights of women and girls abroad, of course, but also here in Canada.

In that respect, I would be remiss in failing to mention the 1,200 missing or murdered aboriginal women. We know so very little about them and Canada must do so much more, as we have been told by United Nations experts.

Finally, we must also stop groups such as Boko Haram and so many others from having easy access to weapons of all kinds. Attempts have been made to get funding. Years ago, we established the Kimberley Process to prevent diamonds from being used to fund these groups. My colleague from Ottawa Centre also has a bill on conflict minerals to prevent these minerals from financing such groups. However, it is just as essential to cut off their supply of arms and munitions.

The best tool that the international community has to do this is the Arms Trade Treaty. This evening, I would be remiss if I did not once again ask the government to sign this treaty, which all of our partners have signed, including the United States. Canada is the only country, or nearly the only one, that is still refusing to sign.

These are my words and my hope for the future. My hope for today is that we can finally bring back our girls, because they are all our daughters. We are all in the same situation. We must be able to bring our girls home, safe and sound. Thank you very much.

• (2115)

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague who always speaks out so passionately. We all want these girls home.

Could my hon. colleague comment on how the length of the abduction, this horrific experience, and exposure to violence could impact the recovery of the girls and families, and what psychosocial assistance should be provided to help them reintegrate into their communities?

More broadly, should more programs be developed to provide all children and youth with educational opportunities? Nigeria has 10 million children out of school. Those opportunities would include vocational training as well as meaningful jobs and leadership training for young adults.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her excellent question, to which I see two main aspects, one of which is education.

As I mentioned in my speech, it is absolutely essential to continue to provide funding for education. As my colleague from Ottawa Centre said, education is the most important thing we can do for children. It is not a gift, it is an obligation and a duty, and Canada has continued to work with developing countries to promote access to education. However, we must not forget the Global Partnership for Education, which is really doing wonderful work and which coordinates efforts being made by number of countries.

Of course, I could not discuss the issue of trauma, because I only had 10 minutes for my speech. However, we have to think not only about the trauma suffered by these girls, but also the trauma in the communities. When a tragedy of this kind takes place, the people concerned are the first ones we must think about. When I say “the people concerned”, I am referring to the families, the brothers, the sisters and the other members of the community.

I hope we will see these girls come home, go back to school and take their little sisters with them.

• (2120)

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I join thousands of people in saying how appalled we all are by this situation.

These are young women, and it is always young women. Here at home, we had the tragedy at the Polytechnique. We have the missing and murdered women. People are always attacking young women, the ones who want to receive an education and take part in building their country. Now they are caught in a trap, like a huge spider’s web, being eaten by flies.

Should Canada not be more assertive and authoritarian and say very resolutely that this is unacceptable and we will not agree to any negotiation?

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Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I think the situation raises the issue of the rights of women and children.

I would not want to take advantage of the debate this evening to be too partisan, because this is a very important human issue. Canada has taken important steps in defending women’s rights. However, I think that we could go much further in terms of reproductive health rights, for instance. Canada is really lagging at the back of the class on this issue.

We can think about the rights of aboriginal women in Canada and the 1,200 murdered and missing aboriginal women. These are some of the issues. We can do much more, and Canada should be a champion of the rights of women and girls.

[English]

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of urgency that I take the floor to speak about the brutal and despicable abduction of over 250 schoolgirls in northeastern Nigeria.

Before I move on, I would like to say that I will be splitting my time with the member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

I would like to extend the solidarity of the Canadian people and their government to the families of these young girls who have been kidnapped and taken from their loved ones. We are all shocked by the scale of this atrocity.

On the night of April 14-15, heavily armed Boko Haram militants dressed as Nigerian soldiers attacked the government secondary school, in the town of Chibok, northeastern Nigeria. The girls, mostly between the ages of 16 and 18, had gathered from various regional schools to take their secondary certificate examination. The terrorists murdered the guards, burned the village, and left with over 300 young girls in a convoy of trucks. The girls were separated into small groups and dispersed to terrorist strongholds in northern Nigeria. The dispersal of the girls over a large area would challenge any government in mounting a successful rescue operation.

During the kidnapping process, about 50 girls managed to escape, but the rest remain captive. Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram, says that he will sell them into marriage and slavery. The kidnappings have not stopped there, and a further 11 girls were kidnapped, on May 6, from the town of Gwoza, also in northeastern Nigeria.

Boko Haram started as an extremist but largely non-violent Islamist group in the early 2000s. In 2010, the group started attacking police, other security forces, and government officials, as a response to a strong government crackdown against the group in 2009, which left its leader and hundreds of its members dead. Since 2010, the violent attacks have continued to escalate. The group has succeeded in capturing weapons from Nigerian forces, to such an extent that the group is now well armed, including with armoured vehicles.

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More recently, Boko Haram has adopted a new tactic of going into villages and conducting large-scale massacres. This was most gruesomely demonstrated by its attack on the town of Gamboru Ngala, which killed over 300 civilians, many of them burned to death when Boko Haram set fire to houses in which civilians had taken refuge from the slaughter. This brings Boko Haram's death tally for the year to over 1,000 Nigerians.

According to Africa's Human Rights Watch, with regard to Boko Haram's activities, "The killing and mutilation of ordinary Nigerians, the abduction and rape of women and girls, and the use of children for fighting are horrifying human rights violations".

The Nigerian government has been combatting this revisionist group for several years. Nigerian President Jonathan established a state of emergency, in May 2013, in the three northeastern provinces where Boko Haram is most active.

However, as military operations have been ramped up, the Nigerian military has been accused by credible sources of major human rights violations, which have resulted in the deaths of a large number of civilians and alienated many others from the government cause. These accusations are a continuing challenge for Nigeria, and we call upon all, including Nigerian security forces, to respect international norms for human rights.

Boko Haram's attacks on civilian population targets are increasing, and it is important that the government of Nigeria receives international support to counter this terrorism. In December 2013, the Canadian government labelled Boko Haram as a terrorist organization.

Nigeria, as we know, faces many challenges. Its huge population, of over 170 million, amounts to one half of the population of West Africa. Its economy is listed by the IMF as the second largest in Africa, after South Africa. Nigeria is also a strong international player and was elected, for the fifth time, to a two-year seat on the UN Security Council, starting in January of this year. It has also contributed troops in support of several UN and African Union peace forces.

However, within the country, there remains inequality, poverty, corruption, failure to protect, and excessive use of force, attacks on religious freedom, violence against women, and early and forced marriages.

Nigeria's neighbours, particularly those bordering on the northeast part of the country, are watching this growing security problem with concern, particularly as their borders are porous. Nigeria's international partners are also watching the security developments with concern. Quite simply, a Nigeria with a major domestic security problem is a problem for all of us.

Canada joins its allies in offering assistance to the Nigerian government and its people at this time of need. Our American, British, and French allies are sending experts and search teams to assist the Nigerian security forces in locating and eventually returning the girls. Other countries, including China and Israel, have made offers of assistance.

●(2125)

Others who will speak after me will elaborate further on what Canada has been doing over the years to support the people of Nigeria and those in West Africa, including efforts in addressing profound challenges, which have been crystallized by the abduction of these girls. Canada has made it a priority to end child, early, and forced marriages, and while the problem is widespread around the world, some projects have taken place in Nigeria. Canada remains committed to supporting Nigeria's most wonderful people, particularly in the area of maternal, newborn, and child health. My colleague from the development side of DFATD will expand on this.

The Government of Canada has offered assistance to the government of Nigeria in providing tools aimed at finding the abducted girls and bringing them home. This measure is in addition to a series of projects funded by the Canadian government and designed to support the Nigerian government's efforts to stamp out terrorism. Through the Global Counterterrorism Forum, with its inclusive membership and action-oriented mandate, we are helping in the fight against those who resort to terror to undermine freedom and peace in all corners of the world. At the same time, we are fostering important ties between Canada's law enforcement agencies and military forces with their counterparts.

Since 2010, Canada's counterterrorism capacity-building program has committed \$28.4 million in concrete programming initiatives in the Sahel that are focused on training and equipment for law enforcement, military, and intelligence bodies. Specifically, Canada's global partnership program is funding two active biological security projects in Nigeria, to secure potentially lethal pathogens kept for research and medical purposes against misuse.

In addition to counterterrorism capacity, Canada is active in building bridges among Nigeria civilians to reduce tensions and violence. The Office of Religious Freedom, of DFATD, funds a project in Nigeria of close to \$733,000 Canadian, with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, to promote intercommunity dialogue and conflict mediation in the central part of the country. While not directly linked to Boko Haram, it will develop local mediation capacity and create dialogue opportunities between communities and religious leaders.

In short, we are standing steadfast with the people of Nigeria and with our allies to fight terrorism.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of questions for the parliamentary secretary.

One thing that should be noted is that Nigeria has now surpassed South Africa in the most recent data that just came out, in terms of economic growth, but yet it has 10 million children who are not in school. Clearly, there is a lot to be leveraged and a lot to do there.

Beyond what we have already heard, is the government intending to provide more support, or has it been asked for more support by the Nigerian government, other than the logistics? That is the first question. Is other support being asked for and are we going to be providing more support?

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Second, has the government decided whether to go to the conference in France? As one of the participating countries, we obviously have a role to play. The second question is on whether the government is intending to go to the conference.

I know there is limited time, but we can get into it later. This is about the whole region. Canada has been involved in certain activities. It is co-chairing the whole response to terrorism. Could the parliamentary secretary elaborate a bit more on what our intentions are to help with regard to this specific situation?

• (2130)

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I will quickly answer these questions.

As I stated in my speech, we are working with our counterparts. Canada is now working jointly with the U.S.A. and Britain. Canada is on the ground helping Nigerians. We are now awaiting the report on the coordination process that is going on, and as soon as the report comes in, we will decide if this task force is requesting further assistance from Canada. Canada, as I stated, is willing to help in any capacity. That is number one.

Number two, in reference to the conference that has been called by President Hollande, of France, this has just happened recently, as we know. We are awaiting the details from President Hollande on the process. As I have stated, we are in consultation with our allies, and we will jointly take the action that is needed and do whatever we can do.

Third, to answer the last question about the overall fight on terrorism, as we know, after Libya, Gadhafi's breakup of the situation in Mali, and with what has happened in Nigeria and in Mauritania, all of these regions in Sahel are facing very serious problems of terrorism. We are now assisting in the capacity building in this partnership that I talked about for these countries to fight the war against terrorism. Out of that, \$500,000 has already been spent in Nigeria, building capacity there.

It is a long-term process, as the member has already pointed out. Nigeria is an oil-rich country, and yet, as the member pointed out, there are many children not going to school. Naturally, there is serious inequality in this country. It is a long-term process, but Canada is there to do whatever it can.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Nigeria's government accepted offers of help last week, from the United States, Britain, France, China, Spain, and Canada. What specifically will Canadians be doing? Are supplementary requests expected or required?

Will Canada be attending the summit that France is hosting? We know that Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger will be attending, and there is speculation that the United Kingdom and the U.S. will be as well.

Looking beyond the crisis, does the government envision a broader good governance and training program for Nigeria, given its importance for Africa?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, first, the well-being of the girls is very important to us. We do not want to take any kind of action that would harm the girls. In that aspect, we are coordinating

our efforts. Canadians are in Nigeria now, along with the U.S.A., Britain, and other countries. It will be one coordinated effort to look for the girls. That is an ongoing process.

As for the conference that France has called for, the reports have just come out. We are going to be working with France. We will work with our allies in that region to address many of these issues, as we have done in the past in Nigeria, as well as in Mali and Algeria.

Canada is strongly involved in the fight against terrorism. As I have stated, that whole region is subject to terrorist activities by groups. Canada is helping with capacity building. That includes Nigeria as well. We have spent close to \$500,000, helping the Nigerians come up to their capacity as well.

• (2135)

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if there is any evidence that the violence and abuse of women and girls often goes under the radar, this urgent issue we are talking about this evening is a clear example of that.

Over the past few weeks, the world has become captivated by this egregious abuse of human freedom and rights. Unfortunately, Boko Haram's abduction of 276 school girls is not its first. About a year ago, in May 2013, the Boko Haram leader released a video saying that it had taken women and children, including teenage girls, hostage. Mr. Shekau said that the hostages would be treated as slaves.

In November 2013, Human Rights Watch said that Boko Haram reported that it had abducted scores of women and girls and used girls as young as 12 in hostilities.

Daniel Bekele, the Africa director at Human Rights Watch, has said:

For a group that claims to be religious, Boko Haram's tactics are the most profane acts we can imagine. The killing and mutilation of ordinary Nigerians, the abduction and rape of women and girls, and the use of children for fighting are horrifying human rights violations.

Mma Odi, executive director of the Nigerian charity Baobab Women's Human Rights said:

It is a very bad situation for those girls. The men went to the school for no other reason than to make them their sex objects. The men will have reduced them to sex slaves, raping them over and over again. And any girl who tries to resist will be shot by them. They have no conscience.

The conditions will be terrible and it seems like the government has just abandoned them because they are girls and they are poor.

As many members in the House are aware, I have worked hard to raise the issue of human trafficking, which is modern-day slavery in our century. When we are raising the issue of these abductions in this House, we must ensure that human trafficking is part of that discussion.

Boko Haram has made it clear that it will use these girls, just as it has in the past, as slaves. Many of the men in Boko Haram have left behind wives and families, and these young school girls will be given to them as sex slaves. The leader of Boko Haram has also publicly threatened to sell these girls for as little as \$12 apiece, stating that there is a "market for selling humans". Boko Haram clearly recognizes that modern-day slavery is alive and well. Today it is estimated that over 27 million are enslaved around the world, and of those most are women and children.

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A common form of modern-day slavery is child, early, and forced marriage. Child, early, and forced marriage is a widespread, harmful practice that threatens the lives and futures of girls and young women around the world. It affects an estimated 14 million girls each year. In Nigeria, approximately 39% of girls are married before their 18th birthdays and 16% are married before they turn 15.

Child, early, and forced marriage is a violation of human rights. It denies girls their childhoods. It disrupts or ends their education, jeopardizes their health, makes them more vulnerable to violence, and limits their participation in economic and social spheres. Child, early, and forced marriage also hinders development. When girls are not able to reach their full potential, everyone suffers: the girls, their families, their communities, and their countries.

Our government is standing up for these girls, even when it is not always popular or expedient to do so. In doing so, we have made ending the practice of child, early, and forced marriage a foreign policy and development priority.

Over the last two years, international momentum to address child, early, and forced marriage has been building. Canada has been instrumental in bringing world attention and action to this issue. For example, Canada led the international initiative to establish the annual International Day of the Girl Child in 2011, which focused on child, early, and forced marriage in its first year. A year later, Canada played an active role in the development of the first resolution focused on child, early, and forced marriage at the Human Rights Council. We also co-led with Zambia the first ever stand-alone resolution on this issue at the UN General Assembly last year. I am proud to say that both resolutions were adopted by consensus, with over 100 co-sponsors, thus putting the issue firmly on the international agenda for the first time.

Canada is also committed to intensifying our programming efforts to end child, early, and forced marriage globally. Through its children and youth strategy, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development works to strengthen and implement national protection frameworks to safeguard the rights of children and youth. The strategy also contributes to increasing girls' access to basic education, which can help prevent child, early, and forced marriage.

● (2140)

In 2013, DFATD spent over \$1 million on programming supporting the implementation of the children and youth strategy. In addition, last October, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced \$5 million in programming support to help address the causes and consequences of child, early, and forced marriage in high-prevalence countries around the world.

Through the Canada fund for local initiatives, a fund that supports small-scale community projects around the world, Canada also works to address child, early, and forced marriage. For example, a project in northern Nigeria allowed the Centre for Girls Education to create safe spaces for community discussion about child, early, and forced marriage. Local mentors led weekly meetings with traditional and religious leaders and parents on the value of education for girls within communities. The Centre for Girls Education also led career workshops to showcase the benefits of girls staying in school.

On April 14, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that over the next two years, Canada will reallocate funds from our voluntary contribution to the Commonwealth toward supporting initiatives that espouse Commonwealth values. A large portion of these funds will be used to combat the practice of child, early, and forced marriage and to promote human rights, including in Nigeria.

Canada knows that the leadership of high-prevalence countries is critical to all successful efforts to address child, early, and forced marriage. Later this month, the African Union will launch a two-year campaign to end child, early, and forced marriage. We are impressed by the fierce determination of many affected countries, including in Africa, to lead the charge on this issue.

We are proud of the work we are doing to end child, early, and forced marriage and are committed to intensifying our efforts to help end this harmful practice worldwide. This intersects with Canadian work on women, peace, and security, including our active efforts to prevent sexual violence in conflict zones. Make no mistake, the kidnapping of these girl children was an act of sexual violence. Whether they have been abused sexually yet or not, the threat of sexual violence is very real.

I am proud that Canada has been in the vanguard of international efforts to address sexual violence. In September, at the United Nations General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and others launched the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, which has now been endorsed by 143 countries.

Our advocacy work continues. Next month, the Minister of Foreign Affairs will lead a Canadian delegation to the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in London, U.K. The summit will be the largest gathering ever on preventing sexual violence and will deliver practical coordinated action to make real impacts on the ground.

Beyond advocacy, Canada is working to address the issue of sexual violence through programming in specific countries of concern. Sexual violence is a serious violation of human rights. It exacerbates situations of conflict and inhibits peace, security, and development. Canada will continue to fight this violence.

This horrendous issue in Nigeria of these 278 children who were abducted by this terrorist group is something we should always hold in our thoughts and prayers. I am so proud that Canada, the U.K., the U.S., and other countries are taking action on a global level to find these girls. As each day passes, they continue to be in ever more danger.

I thank the Speaker for this debate tonight and members on all sides of the House for discussing this very important issue and putting the global spotlight on it.

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[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like many people in Pontiac, I was very shocked to learn about this tragic story. I am the father of two little girls, Gabriella and Sophia. When I talked about it with Sophia, who is now going to school, she did not understand why other girls in the world could not go to school. She is four years old and already she understands the importance of going to school.

I congratulate the government on the measures it has taken so far. However, we also have to talk about promoting education. We have to talk about whether we need to invest in education in countries like Nigeria.

My hon. colleague, the NDP critic for foreign affairs, said it is important that we increase investment in education abroad by millions of dollars. I wonder whether my hon. colleague agrees with me that this investment is important.

● (2145)

[English]

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, I have just reiterated several facets to which Canada has contributed. Canada has put out a great deal of money, \$66 million, and is the tenth largest contributor to Nigeria right now. This horrendous abduction of these innocent children is something that happens very often in Nigeria and other countries in conflict.

In a country like that, Canada has done much to address the issue of the health of children and babies. Maternal health is very important. To get them to school, they have to be healthy children. Education is a very important aspect. One of those little girls we were talking about was interviewed and said that she wanted to be a lawyer. She had run away. Fifty of them ran away. She ran through the bush as fast as she could, terrified. Now she is having trouble going back to any school. It is more than the educational part; it is the safety part and the health part and the education part. We, as a global community, and certainly as a great country, are contributing to that in a very specific way.

Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from a Nigerian-born Canadian in my riding who is a founder of a charity that sets up rural schools in Nigeria. He and the Nigerian community in my riding and people from neighbouring countries are very concerned.

My colleague is a champion of human rights and is especially against human trafficking. He calls upon Canada to continue its influence, not just in Nigeria but with neighbouring countries, such as Cameroon, Niger, and Chad and the international community, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. He is calling on us to use our influence to inspire these countries to help us, because it is such a major issue.

Could the member please comment on why human trafficking, the kidnapping of these 300 girls, is worthy of this international attention?

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague very much for that very insightful question and for his work on the human trafficking file, which has been quite significant.

It is very important that we call it what it is. It is human trafficking. It is the abduction and buying and selling of girls, particularly, as sex slaves. It happens here in Canada. It happens in Nigeria. It happens in many countries. A country such as Nigeria also has severe poverty, child health issues, and childbirth issues that need to be addressed so the children can be healthy enough to go to school. It is a conflict country where terrorism is rampant and where they will blatantly go on TV and say, “We have captured these girls. They are our sex slaves”.

The globe is speaking out right now. Countries are speaking out right now. Members of Parliament in this House are speaking out, outraged by the human trafficking that is happening. It is very good that the focus is on human trafficking so that we can stop it worldwide.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague and friend, the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Like all Canadians and people around the world, I am heartbroken about the abduction of schoolgirls in Nigeria. My thoughts and prayers are with the girls. I cannot begin to imagine how frightened they are. Their anguished families and communities and the people of Nigeria want to bring their daughters home.

In these girls, we see all our children, their hopes and their dreams, and our hearts ache. It is absolutely abhorrent that these girls are alleged to have been abducted to prevent them from attending school. Despite the fact that their school had recently been closed because of terrorist threats, they were so determined to have education they insisted on coming back for exams.

We must all work together to push for more action, both nationally and internationally, regarding this brutal act of violence, this crime, this terror attack, this unconscionable unending nightmare. We must all take whatever steps we can to ensure that the girls are returned to their families unharmed, and that they and all girls in Nigeria can continue their education in a safe environment.

As we all so tragically know, the militant Islamist group Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls from a secondary school in remote northeastern Nigeria on April 14, and has since threatened to sell them into slavery. Another eight girls were taken from another village on May 5. We should all ask why Canada condemned a separate terrorist attack in Nigeria on April 14, but waited over two weeks to condemn the abductions of the schoolgirls. In fact, why did the international community at large wait for close to two weeks before expressing outrage?

The UN Secretary General is deeply concerned about the schoolgirls. He repeats, “...the targeting of children and schools is against international law and cannot be justified under any circumstances”. The UN is sending a high-level envoy to discuss how the world body can support the government of Nigeria.

The UN Security Council has also expressed its profound outrage, and condemned the abduction of the schoolgirls, demanded their immediate and unconditional release, suggested some acts may amount to crimes against humanity under international law, and that perpetrators must be held accountable.

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Ensuring the return of the girls and holding perpetrators accountable goes a long way to ending impunity, and will send a strong message that Nigeria places paramount importance on the protection of girls.

The members of the Security Council have also expressed deep concern at the terrorist attacks conducted by Boko Haram since 2009, which have caused large-scale and devastating loss of life, and represent a threat to the stability and peace of central and west Africa.

The Nigerian president believes the girls are still in Nigeria. The United States, Britain and France have pledged to send specialist teams of intelligence and communications experts to help Nigeria search for the missing schoolgirls. American and British officials have already arrived in Abuja to supplement an American team already on the ground there. They will help Nigeria's government look for the missing girls, plan rescue missions and advise on ways to subdue Boko Haram. We have heard today that Canadians are on the ground and aiding in the effort to find the missing girls, and we are thankful.

There are tough questions being asked after an Amnesty International report accused Nigerian military commanders of knowing the terrorist group was on its way to raid the boarding school at least four hours before the girls were abducted, but not able to raise enough troops to respond. The military counters that it was asked to provide reinforcements that came under attack. CNN reports that what it is hearing on the ground supports the Amnesty International report.

The Nigerian government, which has come under growing criticism at home and abroad for being too slow to react, says that it does not believe the Amnesty International allegations are true, but it is investigating.

● (2150)

Sky News reported that the search for the schoolgirls was closing in on a huge forest near the border with Cameroon, and that the girls had been divided into at least four groups, which would make the rescue more difficult. BBC reported last night that the abducted girls had been sighted, and today we saw video of the children.

What makes the abductions so horrific is that they are not an isolated incident on our most vulnerable, on our most precious. Prior to 2011, most attacks on schools in the north targeted infrastructure and were carried out at night when schools were empty. However, since 2012, teachers and students are increasingly targeted by militants, resulting in abductions, killings and threats.

Between January and July 2013, more than 50 schools were attacked. Dozens of school teachers have been murdered, and universities have experienced heavy casualties by gunmen firing indiscriminately, and in some cases using bombs.

Nigeria has 10 million children out of school, the highest number in the world. Almost one in three primary aged children is out of school, and roughly one of four junior secondary aged children is out of school.

The clock is ticking. The more time passes the greater the risk, including the girls being sold into marriage or engaged in the worst

forms of child labour, sexual exploitation and violence and recruitment into armed groups. The time to act is now.

The girls must be returned safe and sound. UNICEF, for example, stands ready to work with the Nigerian government and provide psychosocial care and other necessary assistance to the girls and their families.

An attack on one school, on one child, is an attack on every school and every child. When a school is under attack and students become targets, not only are their lives shattered, the future of their nation is stolen. There is a broader issue here: children's rights to live free from violence, and girls' right to an education. What happened to these schoolgirls could happen tomorrow to other girls in other countries.

Let us ensure the government supports the efforts of the Nigerian government to secure the girls safe return to the protection of their families. All of Canada's efforts should be undertaken in coordination with the government of Nigeria and key partners, and should be in line with the best interests of the girls and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

How is the government working with our allies to ensure that our efforts are coordinated and targeted and will help bring these girls home? Will Canada call on and support neighbouring countries such as Cameroon and Chad to coordinate search efforts with Nigerian authorities?

Whether it be Nigeria, the Central African Republic, South Sudan or Syria, the government should continue to call for compliance by all parties with international humanitarian law, including the prohibition of attacks on schools, students and teachers. Will Canada support the Nigerian government to bring the perpetrators to justice?

Let us, each and every one of us in the House, raise our voice through this hashtag, bring back our girls movement. Once the girls are safe, will Canada advocate for a post-2015 development goal and indicators that aim to end violence against all children? What will Canada commit to over the next four years at the global partnership for education replenishment meeting on June 26 in Brussels?

Fifty-seven million primary school-age children remain out of school, and half of these children live in conflict-affected areas and disaster zones. We hope that Canada will participate in the summit that will be hosted by France.

The failure to rescue the girls has sparked worldwide outrage. In the words of the Nigerian people, "Enough is enough, the abductions must stop".

● (2155)

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Toronto for her passionate speech tonight. We are pleased to see that members of all sides of the House and the government have condemned the abduction of these young girls. I am happy to hear that our government has provided technical support. I hope this assistance is deployed as soon as possible. We are starting to hear that boots might be hitting the ground soon, which is very good.

It is a huge shock for all of us in Canada and around the world that these young girls have been taken just because they are young girls seeking an education. They were abducted to be enslaved into the sex trade and trafficked just because girls should not have an education. That is how Boko Haram feels.

Today I heard the news that Boko Haram was trying to negotiate. I firmly believe we should not be negotiating with such an organization.

We recognize that there is an urgent need to bring these girls back home safely to their mothers and families. What other steps does my colleague believe Canada should take as global citizens?

• (2200)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, we are pleased today to hear there are Canadian personnel on the ground providing surveillance and technical expertise. We have been asking the government to offer assistance since April 15. Canada should be at the summit. Canada needs to have a role in offering assistance for counterterrorism going forward. Canada should be playing a role education.

There are key questions we should be asking about Boko Haram. How does Boko Haram figure in the Government of Canada's counterterrorism work in West Africa? What projects does it have in Nigeria or West Africa to work against extremism? How does it build government's capacities? Specifically how does it work with the government of Nigeria? What is the government's opinion regarding the inability of the government of Nigeria to control part of its territory, given that Nigeria is a destination of Canadian investment and activity of Canadian extractive companies?

Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's discussion on the history of kidnapping and human rights atrocities by terrorist groups in Nigeria. This is not the first incident. I appreciate her call upon Canada and the rest of the world to respond to these things sooner, to realize how terrible these situations are. If something like this happened here at home, it would not take two weeks for us say that this is a problem.

One of the things I appreciate about her historical approach is that in the 1990s Canada had a major role to play against the military regime in Nigeria. We called upon other countries to use diplomacy against that regime. Even though that was an illegitimate government, it was a government. This is a terrorist group and we need to treat it as such.

I would ask for the member's comments on this being not just an issue about bringing these particular people home, but part of an overarching war on terror.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, again, all of us are appalled or shocked that 276 children were taken from their dormitory when all they wanted was an education. Education should be a basic right. We know it empowers young girls and women. We want these children home. In a wider context, it has highlighted in long-standing security problem in Nigeria.

Boko Haram is a terrorist organization and these children have been taken by a terrorist organization. We want the abductors to immediately return the girls unharmed to their communities and for those with influence on the perpetrators to do everything they can to secure the safe return of the girls and to bring the abductors to

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justice. These are brutal acts of violence and they are unacceptable. Attacks on schools deny children the right to learn in a safe environment and can rob them of their future. Wherever it takes place, abduction of children is a crime and illegal under international law.

• (2205)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate. I thank the member for Ottawa Centre and his colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie for their remarks, and my colleague from Etobicoke North and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights as well. I share all of their views with regard to the event that has been described, the kidnapping of close to 300 young women.

However, I want to go beyond that and say that there are some things that have been happening since then that are encouraging and others that are not encouraging and are troubling.

On the encouraging side, I want to comment on the fact that there are some Muslim organizations that have denounced this event. I think the more we hear from Muslim organizations, both in Canada and around the world, that denounce the actions of Boko Haram, the more encouraging that would be.

Saudi Arabia's Grand Mufti, the top religious authority in Saudi Arabia, has condemned the attacks. The Council of American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR, has condemned them, and so have the Council of Muslim Organizations and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. These are organizations that did the right thing, and I would invite others to do the same because, as the Minister of the Environment said, there is a religious connotation to this that is very difficult, and the fact that young women would be converting under duress is absolutely insane. Any self-respecting religion would not seek to have people converting to it by such means.

In any event, that is one thing that I find encouraging.

The other thing that I find rather discouraging or troubling is the slowness in reaction, which has been mentioned here tonight, from the Nigerian government. A story published in today's local paper indicates that on April 15, the day after the event occurred, the United Kingdom offered help, and three days later, on April 18, made a formal offer of assistance. The U.S., through its embassy and staff in Nigeria in Abuja, did offer some help from day one, but it was a month later, Tuesday and Wednesday of last week, that the Government of Nigeria actually welcomed and accepted offers of help from, as I mentioned, Great Britain, the United States, Canada, France, and China.

The lateness and the slowness in reacting, I think, is troubling, and I would hope that there would be lessons learned from that.

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The fact that Interpol, the international police agency of which Canada is a member, only offered help formally on May 9, almost a month later, is also very troubling because, again, we are not yet at the stage that military actions are deemed necessary; at least, no country has offered military assistance, except perhaps military know-how through communications or investigations. I know we have people from the United States and Great Britain and, I am hearing, from Canada on the ground today, and I expect some of them might be from the military, but it is not a military operation yet. It is an investigation to try to help the Nigerian authorities find these girls and then find a way to free them.

However, the fact that Interpol would take so long in making that offer is, I find, particularly troubling. I thought we could have acted perhaps a bit faster in Canada as well. I gather it was last week that we made an offer of help. If that is so, I would hope that we also would learn from that.

Another aspect has been mentioned to me by a few people I have talked with over the course of the last week. It is an awkward comparison. There was another incident in the world two months ago in which a similar number of people disappeared. I am talking about Malaysian flight 370, with 239 passengers on board including the 12 crew members.

The response was immediate from around the world. A number of countries immediately offered technical help and planes and boats to look for the aircraft. Four countries—Australia, Canada, the U.S., and Vietnam—spent \$44 million in the first month alone searching for the plane, and the search continues two months later.

● (2210)

The urgency was the fact that the batteries in the black box would only work for a month. Therefore, it would be hard to find the remains of the people and to be able to bring closure to their families.

In contrast, here we have a situation of 276 young girls who are alive and have disappeared somewhere into the jungle. They are presumably still in Nigeria. They could also be in Chad or Cameroon, but we are not sure. We do not know exactly where they are, but I think there is an even greater urgency here for the world to act.

I also find the unwillingness of governments so far to actually put resources and money at the disposal of the appropriate authorities to help find these girls and rescue them rather troubling.

There is another example that I wanted to bring up. It concerns another kidnapping of a number of young girls, not in Nigeria, but in Uganda. It happened in October 1996, I believe. A total of 139 young girls were kidnapped. Thanks to one of the Italian nuns working in their school, who followed them into the jungle, 109 were returned. The other 30 remained prisoners. They were forced into becoming brides and were forced into doing sexual favours for Joseph Kony, who headed up the Lord's Resistance Army.

That guy is still around. He has kidnapped hundreds, if not thousands, of youngsters throughout Uganda, South Sudan, Chad, the Central African Republic, and Somalia and turned them into soldiers. He has done so by forcing them to kill their friends or parents to make sure that they would remain at his service.

Alternatively, he has turned them into his brides. The world has not yet taken on Joseph Kony properly.

What is the difference here? I am not too sure that I understand it. Maybe it is social media. It may be the ability of social media, which was not as prevalent in 1996 as it is today, to reach out to the world. We have now had thousands upon thousands of people, reaching into the hundreds of thousands, saying "bring back our girls".

We have had these experiences before, in Africa and elsewhere, in conflicts, whether in Syria, the Central African Republic, or on other continents, when young boys and girls have been kidnapped and turned into soldiers or forced into providing sexual favours for soldiers. Only now are we finally acting, or I hope we are. I am certainly encouraging the government to act, whether we can offer help through direct services or through agencies.

That is one of the questions that this particular incident should force and encourage us to consider. To what extent are we going to help? To what extent will we, Canada and the world, want to help, and how? Do we want to do it directly, with some of our people and boots on the ground, as I have heard, and with our money, or do we want to do it through international organizations such as Interpol, NATO, and the UN? If so, how? Will we do it with our own people? Will we do it with money?

We would be well placed here to engage in Parliament and engage our citizens in determining how serious we are, and to what extent we want to commit to making sure that we will help a country whose children, girls and boys, get kidnapped at a young age to be turned into soldiers and to be sold, as Boko Haram has threatened.

It is absolutely unacceptable. Most Canadians would encourage us as a country to take a much more active role, whether directly or whether indirectly through organizations. I hope what we will learn from our participation will lead us to a greater ability to do what needs to be done to protect these young people.

● (2215)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, both my colleague and I were in Abuja three years ago, I believe, just around the time Goodluck Jonathan was campaigning to become President of Nigeria. We had some very interesting discussions with people in government there and with civil society.

Knowing that Canada is the tenth-largest donor to Nigeria, with some \$66 million having gone into it in the last number of years, and knowing the situation in Abuja, I wonder if my colleague has any thoughts on how the Government of Canada might help in the long run. We have put considerable money into maternal, newborn, and child health initiatives and we have helped with some security development, but I wonder if my colleague has any thoughts that he would like to share with the House.

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Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, we have certain priorities. I tend to share the concern of my colleague from Ottawa Centre about education. In all countries around the world, if children are deprived of an education, then I wish them good luck, and I am not trying to be facetious with the President of Nigeria. Education is a primary objective. If we are not providing enough help on the educational side, then perhaps we should consider doing so.

I have no idea if anybody around the world right now has offered to replace the school or even if it is necessary to do so. I do not know if there are other schools to accommodate these young girls. If the school is going to be rebuilt there, then it has to be secure. That becomes an added component. Perhaps Canada could play a role there.

Unfortunately, in North America that is one of the realities that we have learned to cope with. We have had a few terrible incidents of people going into schools with guns and killing students. I know because I have grandkids who go to school, and I cannot get in there anymore unless I have a pass. There is greater security now in our school system. Perhaps we could share some of that experience, some of that knowledge, some of the techniques with other countries that need it.

The educational aspect is one that we should certainly not abandon and one that we should reconsider in some cases.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Ottawa—Vanier for his speech, and all the members who have taken part or are now taking part in the emergency debate to raise questions about the tragic kidnapping of these young women.

I know that the member who just spoke has travelled in Africa. I would like him to tell us about the economic situation in Nigeria. Also, the present government has an increasing tendency to tie international co-operation to industry and industrial projects. I would like to hear his comments on that subject.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, last month, or two months ago, I think, Nigeria became the biggest economy in Africa, essentially because of its natural resources. The population is in fact 135 million inhabitants, maybe more. It is therefore a large country.

On the first question I was asked, that is right, I was there three years ago and I went back to Abuja, the capital, where things are fine. Once you leave the capital, however, you see the reality, probably not just in Nigeria but in a number of countries in Africa. There is absolutely unbelievable inequality. There are houses that are virtual castles, and if you go barely a half hour down the road, maybe 10 minutes, you find yourself in the middle of a slum, in unsanitary villages.

The distribution of wealth we see in Nigeria is totally unfair and unequal. This is unfortunately one of the realities of Africa. African governments will have to learn to distribute that wealth better; otherwise, the end result will be tension and it may go beyond that to armed conflicts, as we can see in some countries.

When the Canadian delegation goes there, we try to encourage a better distribution of wealth and a degree of transparency. We are not

opposed to the use of those resources, but we hope they will be used well and the revenue they generate will also be used well.

• (2220)

[*English*]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to engage in this debate on the crisis currently unfolding in Nigeria. I will be splitting my time with the member for Durham.

Like everyone else, the Government of Canada was shocked to hear of the abduction of nearly 300 school girls from the school in northeast Nigeria. The girls have been gone for nearly a month, four weeks during which heartbroken mothers and fathers have agonized over the fate of their stolen daughters, pleading, as all desperate parents would, for their safe and eventual return.

We still know very little about what happened, about where these girls were taken, about what their captors ultimately have in mind for them, but slowly the details are emerging, and these details are terrifying. We hear that teenage girls, no more than 16, 17, or 18 years old, will be sold, forced into marriage and robbed of their futures. They are on the cusp of joining the estimated 9.5 million young girls around the world who every year are made to become young brides against their will. This is utterly wrong, and we have a duty to say so.

The Government of Canada has made it a priority to end child early enforced marriage. Indeed, it is in line with Canadian values and ultimately in every nation's self-interest to protect the rights of all girls and help them fulfill their potential.

While in Nigeria last week, the Minister of International Development used the opportunity to meet government representatives, including Vice-President Namadi Sambo. During his meetings, the Minister of International Development offered Canada's continued assistance in the search for the missing girls. This partnership between our two countries is not something new. Canada has always been there for the government and people of Nigeria, having been very active in development work there.

We know that in many developing countries, children in general must overcome incredible odds just to survive. Without adequate health services, with little nutritious food to eat, more than six million children a year die before they reach the age of five. Also, it has been proven time and again that girls who are educated become women who earn more money and ultimately transform societies. The light of knowledge makes it possible to expose these bullies and cowards for what they are.

Canada too understands the power of education for these girls, and that is why Nigeria has long been the recipient of Canadian development assistance. It is worth pointing out that the violence in Nigeria has not deterred Canada from working towards its development goals. We remain committed to supporting the country's most vulnerable people.

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While Nigeria just recently became Africa's largest economy, the rewards of such economic advancement have not yet flowed to its citizens. On the United Nations 2013 Human Development Index, Nigeria ranked 153rd out of 187 countries. More than three out of five Nigerians live on less than \$1.25 a day. Women and children face particularly long odds in accessing health care, during pregnancy and delivery for mothers and for their kids during the critical first years after birth.

For the last 15 years, since the country returned to civilian rule, Canada has proudly partnered with Nigeria, particularly in the area of maternal, newborn, and child health. When the G8 launched the Muskoka initiative in 2010, Nigeria became, and still today remains, one of Canada's maternal, newborn, and child health countries of focus. Eighty percent of Canada's \$1.1 billion in new funding for maternal, newborn, and child health programming is allocated to sub-Saharan Africa where the greatest burden of maternal and child mortality exists.

Nigeria has been a fortunate recipient. From 2010 to 2013, our Muskoka contributions helped to train 1,611 health workers, including nurses and midwives. They now have the skills to provide antenatal and delivery care to an estimated 100,000 pregnant women and newborns and to prevent transmission of HIV to an estimated 3,000 HIV-exposed infants.

• (2225)

The global community continues to chart a course for how best to reach millennium development goals 4 and 5 by 2015, and to build momentum for a meaningful global partnership that will keep maternal, newborn, and child health at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda.

As one step, Canada was pleased to renew its support to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria last December. As a key partner on maternal, newborn, and child health efforts, the global fund is saving 100,000 lives a month. Canada is proud to be contributing \$650 million over the next three years to support the global fund's large-scale prevention, treatment, and care programs against AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

Later this month, the Prime Minister will host an international maternal, newborn, and child health summit that will shape the future of child and maternal health collaborations in Canada and around the world. The summit, called "Saving Every Woman Every Child: Within Arm's Reach" will be held in Toronto May 28-30. It will build on Canada's leadership and chart the way forward in three key areas: delivering results for mothers and children, doing more together globally, and real action for women's and children's health. Saving the lives of women and children is not only a moral imperative, it is the foundation for building prosperous communities for this and future generations. This applies equally in Nigeria, all other parts of Africa and, indeed, all over the world.

Even the healthiest of citizens will struggle without opportunities to earn a living, and opportunities to earn a living will go unmet without citizens who are healthy and who possess the skills required to keep a steady job.

Like many other African countries, recent high economic growth rates in Nigeria have not always translated into reductions in

unemployment and poverty. Many challenges persist, from broken infrastructure and financial systems to a weak business-enabling environment, to youth unemployment, to environmental threats, to volatile resource pricing and food instability. Canada is working hard with Nigerian officials to address these issues by aligning initiatives with national and regional plans in order to support the country's ownership of its own development. The need for meaningful, sustainable employment, especially for youth, is also a critical issue and is addressed through Canada's focus on sustainable economic growth.

Canada is supporting improved technical and vocational skills, and increased business opportunities for the Nigerian workforce, with the overall objective of increasing employment and improving prospects for disenfranchised youth.

Nigeria is a country blessed with enormous potential, enough to give its citizens hope for a better future. With a gross domestic product that reached \$510 billion in 2013, it is a country on the rise, a huge marketplace. That should be the headline news, but it is not.

Instead, today, Nigeria is on the front page for all the wrong reasons. The violence in Nigeria has had serious consequences for the civilian population, especially people living in the northeast of the country, the area where violence is most intense. Six million people have been directly affected by the violence. Three hundred thousand had to leave their homes and seek refuge in other parts of Nigeria or in neighbouring countries. The vast majority of internally displaced people are women and children.

There is no place in this world for brutal terrorist regimes like Boko Haram, for groups that perpetuate violence against innocent civilians under the guise of it being their divine right, if not their divine obligation. Such groups, such cruelty, such blatant disregard for human rights cannot be tolerated. That is why Canada is doing everything it can to help Nigeria bring back those girls.

• (2230)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, which was full of very interesting information.

We know that one of the major issues relates to the question of governance, human rights, and the rights of women in particular, and we see this in the present situation in Nigeria. In 2011-12, Canada gave Nigeria \$48 million in aid, if I recall correctly.

In terms of that envelope, I would like to know what Canada is doing regarding support for civil society, respect for human rights, respect for women's rights and good governance.

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[English]

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, actually, it was \$66 million we have spent in development issues in Nigeria. Obviously, a lot of that money has been focused on maternal, newborn, and child health. We know that so many of the women there are facing lack of opportunity for services.

When I was in Abuja, I spoke with a doctor at the embassy. We met there and had a conversation about the situation for young girls. He told us that one of the reasons so many young girls die in childbirth is they are very young. Many of these girls are between the ages of 12 and 14 and they just do not have access to health care services. We are focused on that. We know the job is not yet done, which is the very reason why the Prime Minister has said we will host this summit in Toronto at the end of May. We want to galvanize global attention on putting money toward saving more moms in childbirth and having more children reach their fifth birthday.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary for the information she has provided tonight.

Canada, the European Union, and the United States have already designated Boko Haram a foreign terrorist organization. Canada's Criminal Code criminalizes membership in Boko Haram, as well as the transfer of money to support it.

It is now being reported that Boko Haram may have laid land mines in the jungle of northeast Nigeria to spoil attempts to free the schoolgirls. I am wondering if the Parliamentary Secretary could confirm whether this is correct or not and if so, what the anticipated consequences for the operation are.

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, I would have to look into that and get back to my colleague. However, I would like to take the opportunity just to say that we condemn the use of land mines and I am sure our government will want to be involved in ensuring that those terrible and devastating things are not used anywhere.

I would like to use this moment though to talk about the need for education and how much Canada has supported education globally. My own daughter is a teacher in Ghana, West Africa right now. Ghana is not very far away from Nigeria, so I have some real concerns about the things that are going on in that part of the world. My daughter has given me lots of insight into the schools. Of course, in Ghana, they are in a very safe place, but the situation in the schools is so needy.

My daughter has been home for the last three weeks on a break between semesters. We spent some time on Saturday just going to the Teacher's Supply Store in Toronto to purchase things that she is going to take back. Fundamentally, she has a chalkboard and a piece of chalk. Those are all the supplies she has in her classroom. Therefore, we are sending her back with a barrel that will be full of supplies for the school where she is teaching.

Obviously, all of us would like to see the children of Nigeria, of any of these African countries, have access to better education. They need qualified teachers and I am hopeful that is an area where Canada will be able to help.

The foreign affairs committee is about to undertake a study, at my request, on education in particular. There are some smaller things

that we are going to be looking at as well, but I look forward to that study and how Canada can put forward some recommendations.

• (2235)

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in the House tonight with a mixture of emotions, in this critical debate on this profoundly disturbing subject. First, I stand in solidarity with my colleagues on all sides of this place, who find the events of April 14 and the weeks since, abhorrent and repugnant. We feel the need to do something.

I echo the sentiments of many of my colleagues tonight. On April 14, terror was struck in the hearts and minds of young girls, but also their families, with 100 to 300 young girls taken from a school in Nigeria. Even that report is concerning because it took weeks to truly ascertain the number, and for the government of Nigeria to start talking publicly about this brash kidnapping, the snatching of girls, and their potential sale. The events are so abhorrent to any civilized society in any democracy.

It is also unfortunate that it took so long for the global community to become attuned to this act of profound terror. In fact, some commentators have said that throughout April there was more time spent on a missing airliner, of which everyone knew the people on board could no longer be saved. There was more time and attention paid to that, and that puts it in perspective. I am glad that the member for Ottawa Centre and others have put this on our national agenda, where it should be.

I also stand before the House as a father of a young girl of seven years old, Mollie. She is the apple of my eye, someone I left at home before school this morning because I had to leave early to come to Ottawa. The very principles of safety and security of our children is probably a common theme among parents, from Canada to Nigeria. I can only empathize with the absolute terror that the families of these girls must be feeling, and the profound sense of impotence they have in not being able to provide basic security to their children.

It is also important to note that these girls were taken from a school. Their parents have sought the best for them. They were pursuing the goals that are universal human rights in this world. Not only was their right of liberty stolen from them, but the message being sent by Boko Haram was one of terror, not just in physical threat, but to cast fear in those pursuing the best for their children, including our girls. These are so fundamental to our principles as Canadians that they truly shock us to our foundations.

I stand as a member of Parliament in this place and am proud that our government and Canada have joined with the U.S., the United Kingdom, France, China, and other nations, that have pledged support to the government of Nigeria, to try to not only locate and bring these girls back to their homes, but to deal with Boko Haram, the group that took them.

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As many members of the House have noted, our government immediately offered surveillance equipment in helping to track this terror organization. Beyond that, we also have provided training and operators to help bring that expertise to the ground immediately. Our expertise, particularly on some of the things related to surveillance and intelligence gathering, has been instantly brought to bear on the ground in the country and, I would say, in bordering countries. Boko Haram has also been a threat to Cameroon, Niger, and the whole region. We stand willing to work with our allies and with the government of Nigeria on that.

It is good to note that Canada has a strong relationship with Nigeria. We are the tenth-largest donor to that country on a general annual basis. There has been \$66 million in aid delivered in the last fiscal year to that country, on a variety of fronts. That has included education, so that young girls like the ones who were snatched can pursue their full potential as young people in that country, but also in our worldwide fight to end child, early, and forced marriage. Sadly, these issues have been interspersed, as these girls were taken and then forced into horrific relationships and unspeakable harm.

● (2240)

It is also important to call out Boko Haram for what it is. It is a terror group that strikes at the basic fundamentals of our society. We should pursue organizations like this with unrestrained vigour until they are eliminated. It is terror.

It is ironic that just on Friday, at our National Day of Honour, we paid tribute to the 40,000 men and women of the Canadian Forces who spent time on the ground in Afghanistan. That was part of the initial war on terror after September 11, when a failed state allowed al Qaeda to train within it, to a point that it struck not just at western values, as in this case in Nigeria, but at the western world itself. It is sad that sometimes it takes us to be shaken out of our complacency, from the lovely distance we have from some of this terror.

Here we have been thrust into it, and we should say it for what it is. Boko Haram takes its name from the term “forbidden”. “Haram” means “forbidden”. Locals have called it Boko Haram because they feel that western education is forbidden. That is the root of the term. It is a perverse group that uses terror not just to strike fear, but to actually keep people in that country subjugated. It is terrible.

It is a group that has attributed 10,000 deaths to its activities in Nigeria and countries in the region. Canada placed Boko Haram on its list of known terror organizations in 2013. It is important to reiterate that wherever there are groups such as this, Canada should play a role, alongside our allies, and of course in this case working directly with the Nigerian government, to ensure that these groups cannot operate with impunity. As we have seen, from 2009 to today, this group has escalated in its violence and its acts of terror.

Another interesting development is “hashtag diplomacy”. Some have suggested that it does not play a role and it is just raising awareness, but it is doing more than that. From the First Lady of the United States to the Pope, the awareness has helped shake the complacency that sometimes sets in in the western world, thinking that we are far removed from these gathering threats of terror that occupy developed or challenging states.

Hashtag diplomacy not only affects prominent people like popes and presidents, it also impacts people in my riding of Durham. I would like to compliment the grade seven and eight students at the Good Shepherd Catholic School, in Port Perry, who asked to meet with me on this very subject to ask what Canada can do to help save our girls.

In some ways, hashtag diplomacy seems so far removed from the terror that many Nigerian families are feeling. However, if it raises this issue, much in the way that my colleagues and I are debating this tonight, we will hopefully get to a state where groups like Boko Haram cannot operate in such fashion because the global community will condemn the conduct.

I also want to urge this House and the people watching this debate to remember that tolerance and education are Canadian values. It is appropriate to conclude with the remarks that His Holiness the Aga Khan delivered in this House just a few months ago, in February. It is important to show that Boko Haram has twisted a religious faith and does not represent the faith of Islam. The Aga Khan said in this place:

It has become commonplace for some to talk about an inevitable clash of the industrial West and Islamic civilizations. But Muslims don't see things in this way. Those whose words and deeds feed into that point of view are a small and extreme minority. For most of us, it is simply not true. We find singularly little in our theological interpretations that would clash with other...faiths — [...]

He went on to add:

Yet sadly, what is highly abnormal in the Islamic world gets mistaken for what is normal.

Let us not mistake the abhorrent actions of Boko Haram as we move forward to shut down this terror group, and recognize that diversity, tolerance, and strength, which are Canadian values, should be global values.

● (2245)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the different comments we heard from around the world are interesting. My colleague mentioned some very prominent people who spoke and used, as he said, the hashtag diplomacy, and by the way, I agree with him on his comments.

A young girl also spoke out, the young girl who captured all of our imaginations, Malala. She said very eloquently and simply that if we remain silent, this will happen more and more. She really nailed it. We all have to speak out again this to make sure it does not happen again.

I want to ask my colleague what more we can do. One of the things we have done in the past, and it was actually with Nigerian personnel, was in the AU-UN mission in Darfur. We trained Nigerians to help in that mission, particularly around police training, something the Nigerian government obviously needs help with. Knowing the background, would he think this is something we could help with?

Secondly, where does he believe Canada should be in terms of the global education fund? We have asked that his party support the ongoing commitment to Global Partnership for Education to the tune of \$30 million—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, certainly as someone who served in the Canadian Forces, the initial reaction as a father and a former military person is to send in special forces, send in JTF2. We need to get these girls back. That is the gut reaction.

We have to work with Nigeria to see how Canada can offer our assistance best, recognizing the sovereign territory of that country and trying to work with them and our partners in the U.S. and the United Kingdom on giving them the tools that would best help them root out these terrorists and provide security within their own country. We believe in the early stages that surveillance to localize Boko Haram is the first step, but perhaps training and additional resources, if called for, alongside our allies would be the next step.

Certainly I think our government has a number of programs, including the one he mentioned that we support on a global basis, whether through the United Nations or on a bilateral basis with countries to promote education, because really, the terror here is not just the physical threat that groups like Boko Haram provide; they are actually trying to keep repressed by taking education from them, especially young girls, and that is particularly abhorrent.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope my hon. colleague will let the grade 7 and 8 children know how much we appreciate their caring.

There have been reports that some of the girls have been forced into marriage with their abductors who have paid the nominal bride price of \$12, we hear, and that some may have been carried across the borders into Cameroon and Chad.

I am wondering if the member can confirm whether these reports are correct or not, and what the consequences for any rescue operation might be, particularly as multiple jurisdictions are involved.

● (2250)

Mr. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her passionate remarks here tonight and for the question.

As I have mentioned, and my colleague from Newmarket—Aurora also mentioned, Canada has strong leadership in our support for funding to end child and early forced marriage. That relates in one way to what is going on here. Really, it is the terror of the kidnapping and the coercion involved in this case that needs to end, and really, the perversion of a faith in the process that I tried to also address in my remarks and how Canada can bring our respected approach to diversity and pluralism as we go forward and talk about these important subjects.

The challenge for this region and the challenge for civilized countries trying to address global terror networks, whether it is al Qaeda or Boko Haram, which is an al Qaeda affiliate, but is probably centred mainly in Nigeria, but is in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. We have to have a global response working with our allies, but also working with countries in the Maghreb in Africa to make sure there

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is a coordination and to make sure that they just do not go on to a failed state and regroup. We really have to have a coordinated global response.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Jeanne-Le Ber.

“Ramenez nos filles”: “Bring back our girls”. I and all my colleagues in the House join our voices to those of the mothers and families who are experiencing the sheer agony of knowing their girls were kidnapped. We are pleased that the House is holding this debate, at the request of the hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

I would also like to take this opportunity to draw the government's attention to the crisis that has been unfolding in Nigeria and the measures that should be taken to help find a solution that is in keeping with Canada's humanitarian tradition. The kidnapping of 267 innocent young girls last month by Boko Haram has devastated us all. It is outrageous.

Our first duty as parliamentarians is to remember a truth that is often forgotten. While we may not know these young girls or their families, and we are thousands of kilometres from Nigeria, we are all closely linked by an inextricable connection. Our humanity links each of us to each of them. Turning a blind eye to their plight is akin to turning a blind eye to the ties that bind us together. It is unacceptable to use such actions, which belong in another era, to advance a cause.

As parliamentarians, we must share that simple truth with the whole world. The great Ernest Hemingway, in his time, reignited the light of universal consciousness with the words he borrowed from philosopher John Donne. Please listen closely to his words and ponder them carefully so that we may understand the full scope of our actions here in the House tonight.

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea...Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.

Those few sentences set our course of action. We cannot turn a blind eye to the tragic events in Nigeria without losing some of our humanity. However, that alone will not protect these young girls from the madmen who haven taken them hostage. To rescue them, we must understand the situation and work together on finding ways to deal with it so that Canada can contribute to the release of these girls and to stabilizing this region.

There is no room for partisan language here. The opposition is not trying to fault the government. The government does not have to defend its record. We must work together to find a common solution. We are providing constructive and positive criticism of the government's action on this file. We are speaking with one voice, that of Canada. That is why I commend the initiative by the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs to bring Nigeria's partners together, including the United States, Great Britain and France, in order to provide the necessary surveillance equipment to find the 223 kidnapped young girls.

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I hope this aid is deployed as soon as possible, and I am calling on the government to provide the opposition with regular updates in a spirit of straightforward and honest co-operation. This approach seems to be the only possible option for concerted action on the ground in the face of a situation that becomes more alarming with each day.

On April 14, a bombing claimed 75 victims in Abuja. The next day, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of 276 young girls. Then, on May 5, there was an attack on the city of Gamboru Ngala, which reportedly killed 300 people. The same day, Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram, announced that he was preparing to sell the kidnapped girls as slaves. This shows the growing and worrisome inability of local authorities to regain control of northern Nigeria in particular.

The accounts of the atrocities committed in Nigeria are horrifying. As we saw during the civil war that ravaged the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in conflicts of this nature, it has become commonplace for women to be systematically targeted. Terrorists deliberately attack these innocent victims in the most despicable ways, leaving terror and destruction in their wake.

Restoring order is an indispensable prerequisite for any long-term stabilization solution.

• (2255)

Terrorists, no matter where they are, must understand that their actions will not go unpunished. Not only do they discredit the cause they claim to defend, but they will be prosecuted and judged for their actions.

That is why Canada must actively help Nigeria in its fight against terrorism by taking concrete action, such as establishing police co-operation between the two countries, for example. There can be no viable political agreement unless the security situation improves.

The next step will be to create the conditions for true long-term regional stabilization. Repression cannot be the only means to achieve that end.

Insecurity, exclusion, poverty and the lack of real democracy and a just society are key factors that allow terrorist groups to recruit militants.

An international force whose only purpose is to crack down on terrorist acts would not consider these factors. Thus, any solution would only be temporary because the embers would continue to burn under the ashes.

Some other countries in the region, such as Mali, are also affected by political crises and civil wars that are seriously compromising regional stability. For that reason, the crisis requires a political solution at the local and regional levels.

Canada has a crucial role to play, locally and regionally, in bringing this crisis to an end. In addition to immediate assistance, we can also provide research and surveillance assistance. Canada must also get involved in the economic development of western African countries in order to address the endemic root causes of terrorism. To that end, the government must ensure that Canadian investments in the region allow for a fair distribution of profits to the local people.

We in the NDP are calling on Canada to sign the Arms Trade Treaty in order to prevent conventional weapons from fuelling conflicts.

Let me remind hon. members that in the conflict that affected the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the combatants did not use any heavy weapons or weapons of mass destruction. However, the civil war that ravaged that country between 1998 and 2002 killed more than 3 million people. It is the deadliest conflict since World War II.

It is therefore imperative to take every possible measure to put an end to small arms trade and trafficking. If we do not make an effort to do so, conditions will continue to exist so that political crises in African countries are marked by indiscriminate violence time and time again.

Those are the main actions that Canada should take to immediately alleviate the crisis in Nigeria and stabilize the region in the longer term.

I urge the government to take these simple measures. They will send a strong message of support to the people of Nigeria and help mitigate the overall factors that lead to crises in Africa in the long term.

The gravity of the situation, our country's history and our humanist values require us to act.

• (2300)

[*English*]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Nigeria about 8%, maybe a bit less, of the parliamentarians are female. I reflect on the number of female parliamentarians that I have met in many African countries. I was in Mozambique in December for the conference on the African Minerals Development Centre. Minister Bias, the minister of mines in Mozambique, is the chair of that centre. I reflect on the number of women who have significant positions in African parliaments.

Knowing that women are going to influence the next generation of young girls, does my colleague have any thoughts on how we as female parliamentarians might be able to communicate with our female parliamentary colleagues in Africa? Is there any influence that we could bring to bear on some of these issues that Africa faces?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

What she is talking about is the importance of women and girls and the crucial part they play in the development of their country. Female parliamentarians make a very honourable and constructive contribution to government institutions in African countries that results in a completely different dynamic. They help raise awareness and encourage people to take into account the very nature of these countries and their development.

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My colleague suggested that we might be able to arrange meetings at the international level with these other women and organize forums and opportunities for exchange. I think those are some very good ideas that would enable us to learn more about what these female parliamentarians are doing, to better understand their work. At the same time, we would be able to talk about a vision that women from all walks of life and all over the world have in common.

[*English*]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Nigeria has 10 million children out of school, the highest number in the world. Almost one of three primary children is out of school and roughly one in four junior secondary aged children is out of school. Nearly 6.3 million or 60% of the 10 million Nigerian children out of school live in the northern part of the country. Globally, 57 million primary school aged children remain out of school. Half of these children live in conflict affected areas and disaster zones. The Global Partnership for Education replenishment meeting is coming up on June 26 in Brussels with the request of \$120 million from Canada.

Does the hon. member think Canada should contribute and if so, how much?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her excellent question.

This evening, many members have highlighted the importance of education for women and girls and people in general. As a country, we will certainly have to provide substantial aid. I cannot point to a figure here, but I think we really need to focus—even more than we already do—on financial assistance for the development of and access to education for as many African and Nigerian children as possible. I sincerely believe that education is the way for people to become aware of what they need to do for their country. Education opens doors to all kinds of development options. Yes, Canada must find a way to invest as much as possible in developing education again and again.

• (2305)

[*English*]

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think I speak for everyone in this House tonight who has given of their time and their sleep to speak on this subject. We are all seized with this event and are horrified and concerned.

I woke this morning and turned on the TV, as I am apt to do, to scan the news on CBC and CTV and to catch up on what had happened overnight to prepare myself for the day to some extent. I was shocked and horrified by the images of some of these young girls who reportedly were forced to convert to Islam.

I was struck by a banner I saw on CTV this morning about one of the young girls who managed to escape, which said that she was afraid to go to school. These are the words of one of the handful of young women who managed to escape her captors. This young woman, with the blessing of her parents and her family, chose to learn about herself and the world around her.

These young women chose to take advantage of the opportunities, limited though they may be, to build a better life for themselves. This

opportunity was stolen from them. As these young girls sat in their class to learn, they experienced a lesson in brutality. They experienced a lesson in the evil men do.

They were taken from that place where they felt safe. They were taken from their families. The men that stole them call themselves the faithful. They call themselves warriors of Islam. However, I would like to stress that this act of tuggery, this act of cowardice, has nothing to do with Islam, as I have come to learn and as it has been expressed to me by members of the Muslim community in my riding that I have had the pleasure of meeting with.

This, in no uncertain terms, was an act of war. It is an act that brings a heightened reality to the changing face of war, where young girls, women, and communities are targeted with the sole purpose of destroying that which the community holds dear.

We see this type of warfare perpetrated in many parts of the world. We saw it, for example, in the attempted assassination of a young schoolgirl named Malala Yousafzai. Why? It was because she wanted to go to school.

According to UNESCO's website, apparently two-thirds of the out-of-school children in Pakistan are girls, which results in women being two-thirds of the illiterate in their communities.

Women and children are being targeted as strategic targets in conflict areas, in conflicts that hide behind false faith and manipulative ideologies. Neither Nigerians nor the international community are prepared. We are not prepared to deal with the stealing of children from their schools, and we need to be.

We need to be able to act pre-emptively to protect those who would be targeted by men who give themselves names such as Boko Haram, and educating young girls to become leaders in their communities is part of that response.

• (2310)

There has to be a commitment from within Nigeria to protect the schools and the young souls that inhabit them.

We must also be prepared for the aftermath. The international community must develop, in concert with the communities, a support system for these young girls, their families and their communities. It should be a support system that allows for the healthy reintegration of these young girls when they are returned. No matter what faith any of us practice in the House or around the world, we all pray that each and every one of these young girls is returned to her family safely.

By sharing collective expertise, Nigeria and other countries that face similar acts of violence can develop the means to protect those who would be targeted and to respond to these needs. These acts are not new. The international community response, however, needs to change. We need to stop thinking of acts of this nature, of violence against women and the kidnapping of young girls, as offshoots of war. We need to start thinking of them as actual choices and as targeted actions.

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The international community must refocus its efforts in capacity building. Canada must re-engage with the African continent, and it must do its part in helping to slow the flow of small arms into the African continent.

Canada and the international community must be vigilant and be seen to be vigilant in order to send a clear message that the kidnapping of young girls is a crime. We will work with Nigeria and the international community in responding to this crime.

Malala, the young Pakistani girl, spoke simply but precisely when she said, "...if we remain silent then this will spread, this will happen more and more and more".

It is important that Canada does what it must to ensure that no young girl in Nigeria or any other part of the world has to say "I am afraid to go to school".

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and friend for his caring and for his speech tonight.

On Sunday, one of the more than fifty teenagers who escaped from Boko Haram said the kidnapping was "too terrifying for words". She said that more of the girls could have escaped, but they were frightened by their captors' threats to shoot them. She also said, "Now I cry each time I come across their parents and see how they weep when they see me".

The teenager said that the thought of going back to school, as my colleague pointed out, either the burned out ruins of her own school or any other school, was terrifying.

What does my hon. colleague think Canada should do to help protect children from violence, restore faith in Nigeria's local security system, and protect the rights of girls to education?

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Mr. Speaker, that is a tall order for a young guy like me, but I will start with the last question first.

Over the years, we have developed an expertise in dealing with young children who have gone through abusive situations in our own country. We have developed the expertise to deal with the psychological wounds that this type of experience inflicts. We can lend that expertise.

Yes, we have to tailor it and ensure that it balances with the community and the culture itself, but there is learning that can be done right across the board in how the community welcomes back those young girls and how those young girls can begin to look at themselves again, not feel things like survivor guilt or that they themselves have done something wrong, and get to a point where they are not afraid anymore to go to school.

• (2315)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is one of the members of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association executive. We have had some visits to countries in Africa. We have visited some of the schools that are in need of assistance.

Canada was one of the contributors to the global partnership for education fund. We put forward \$45 million in the last replenishment

conference. I know that this money has helped put 19 million children in school. It has helped build some 300,000 classrooms.

One of the problems we have seen, though, is in capacity building for teachers. I wonder if my colleague has any thoughts on how Canada might help with that capacity building that is so urgently needed in instruction.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for the question and also for her participation in Canada-Africa. As she said, we have made a number of trips together as part of a delegation to the continent.

I will answer using the *raison d'être* of Canada-Africa. It is to begin to develop discussions on the parliamentary level. As our chairperson says very often, we have a connection leader to leader, executive to executive, and we have the connections of NGO to NGO. However, that middle connection, that decision-making connection, parliamentarian to parliamentarian, is missing.

I think the member will agree that one of the things we have found that many countries have in common is best practices we could share on how to set up the education system and protect it, especially in areas where young girls are at risk. How can we set up a system where that money goes not only to educating but to making sure that those who are being educated, those who choose to be educated, are protected?

I think Canada can help by sharing best practices, along with the funding we give.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join with my colleagues this evening with a profound sense of concern, a profound sense of shared feeling with the victims of Boko Haram, and a sense of apprehension because of the history of Boko Haram, a group that has emerged as a prototype of *hostis humani generis*, of enemies of humanity and of the litany and pattern of its atrocity crimes.

And so I join my fellow parliamentarians from all sides of the House not only in condemning the Boko Haram kidnapping of 300 schoolgirls and its threat to sell them into slavery and acts of forced conversion but to express our solidarity with the people of Nigeria, with those affected by this act, and extend our sympathies to the families who seek nothing more than the return of their loved ones safe and sound.

Let there be no mistake about it: this is not the first criminal assault by Boko Haram, and unless we effectively combat its criminality, its crimes against humanity, this terror will not end and this will not be its last terrorist assault.

I note that yesterday was Mother's Day, a time to celebrate and reflect upon the contribution of women in all our lives. I cannot help but feel terribly saddened to think of the mothers and fathers of these abducted women and those who were killed or harmed in earlier assaults by this same Boko Haram cruelty. I cannot help but feel saddened to think of what these families must be thinking in this moment of despair. Indeed, we must think not only of the schoolgirls, but of their families and their communities, and even other schoolgirls who, because of this, may be even more afraid to attend school and receive an education.

As my colleague, the member for Etobicoke North, said it so eloquently this evening in her compelling remarks, “Enough is enough, these abductions must stop”.

As she put it and reminded us, let us not forget that Nigeria has 10 million schoolchildren who are out of school, more than any other country in Africa, more than any other country in the world, a backdrop to that which we are discussing this evening.

Indeed, it is important to stress that those kidnapped were young girls. Boko Haram, whose name means roughly, and it has been mentioned this evening, “western education is a sin”, is really a manifestation of its extremist Islamist ideology. I concur with my colleague, the member for Jeanne-Le Ber, as he put it, this is not an expression of Islam; it is in fact a repudiation of it.

I was pleased to note Muslim leaders have spoken out in repudiation of the Boko Haram because this is a group that thrives on the marginalization, on the exclusion, on the oppression of young women and girls.

As Nicholas Kristof put it recently in *The New York Times*:

Why are fanatics so terrified of girls’ education? Because there’s no force more powerful to transform a society. The greatest threat to extremism isn’t drones firing missiles, but girls reading books.

That is why we must seek to empower women and girls to provide them the knowledge, the skills, the resources, and the protection which they need to succeed and to fight back against oppression, against punitive patriarchy, against early forced marriage, against enslavement and sexual violence, against forced conversion, against all these manifestations of terrorism that have been visited upon them, and to make their own choices without fear.

• (2320)

Canada’s most recent honorary citizen, Malala Yousafzai, who has been quoted this evening, and appropriately so, and I will quote her again, supports that which has been said by my colleague. As she put it:

Education is education. We should learn everything and then choose which path to follow.

Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is human.

As should be evident, empowering women and girls is a question of fundamental human rights, of the promotion and protection of human dignity, in the most profound sense of the word. As I have often said in this House, but it does bear repeating again, women’s rights are human rights, and there are no human rights which do not include the rights of women.

We must see the fight for women’s rights as the fight for the rights of us all, beginning with the most vulnerable of the vulnerable, defenceless children abducted from what should have been a protected space, a school dorm, and regrettably with an attendant sense of impunity, nurtured by the inaction of both the Nigerian government and the indifference of the international community. This did not just begin now. It has been going on for years, and the tormented have only their victimization to bear witness.

This sentiment about the importance of promoting the dignity and the well-being of young girls and women was echoed by the First Lady Michelle Obama, who this week declared:

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These girls embody the best hope for the future of our world...and we are committed to standing up for them not just in times of tragedy or crisis, but for the long haul.

We are committed to giving them the opportunities they deserve to fulfill every last bit of their God-given potential.

I emphasize her words “for the long haul”. It is a tragedy and shame that far too often for women and girls that inherent God-given potential is stifled, and far too often by lack of access to education.

As Malala Yousafzai writes so movingly in her book *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*:

Let us pick up our books and our pens.... They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world. [...]

To sit down on a chair and read my books with all my friends at school is my right. To see each and every human being with a smile of happiness is my wish.

I do not wish to recount the terrifying details of this terrorist act of kidnapping that forms the subject of tonight’s debate, as I believe colleagues have recounted the situation in detail and have expressed quite eloquently the need for action. Indeed, it was the absence of action, and this bears mentioning again, the absence of outrage, not just at this latest Boko Haram profanity, but at the earlier assaults and profanity, over all of these years, which has nurtured an attendant sense of impunity that led to the pattern of criminality.

My colleague from Ottawa—Vanier has contrasted the sustained preoccupation of the international community with the missing Malaysian airline. We need and still need to be concerned by what happened, but there has been sustained CNN 24/7 preoccupation, to the exclusion of everything else, including the exclusion of what has been happening through the assault by Boko Haram, whose atrocities have gone unaddressed, let alone unredressed.

As I prepared my remarks today, the latest development indicated that the leader of the Boko Haram terrorists announced that he would release more than 200 schoolgirls abducted by his forces in exchange for prisoners held by the Nigerian authorities.

• (2325)

It is this issue I wish to address by recounting a story I have yet to tell in the Commons these 14 years that I have been here, though I wrote about it earlier this year. It is the story of my niece, Hagit Zabitsky.

I like to remember Hagit as a thoughtful 22-year-old, both shy and introspective. Born in Jerusalem into a family of five children, she travelled abroad and spent the 1996-1997 winter with my family in Montreal. We had many conversations that winter, including conversations about her future plans when she would return home in the spring of 1997. She planned to attend university, study humanities, work with the disadvantaged, and eventually become an artist reflective of her artistic sensibility. Tragically, she never had the chance.

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Hagit lived in Kafr Adumim, a community in the Judean desert outside Jerusalem. A nature lover, Hagit loved to hike and explore nature in the Judean hills outside her backyard. She was hiking with a friend in the hills when she was abducted and bludgeoned to death. As was later established, her attacker was a terrorist who set out to kill a Jew, any Jew. My niece was not personally targeted; she was simply a Jew on the nature trail. Today there is an annual hike in Hagit's memory, where friends and family gather by a plaque in her honour not far from her home.

I am remembering this because I could not help but think of Hagit and her family when I thought about the abducted Nigerian girls. I think not only of the suffering of these young Nigerian girls but how they may be forever changed, and their families transformed as well. I think of how my family would have done anything to have Hagit return safe and sound if only they could have had that chance. The murderer of my niece is now in jail, but that does not bring her back. It does not stop the suffering that the family endures to this day. Indeed, my family tells me that they remain fearful that her killer may yet be released as part of a terrorist prisoner release to further Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

There is a certain universality of terrorism in its murderous assault, as in the terrorist Boko Haram killing and enslaving of these young girls or in its murderous slaughter of innocents over the years or in the many innocents killed and injured and lives destroyed, in the pain of victims and their families, in the impact on their communities and beyond.

Again, and let there be no mistake about it, Boko Haram views these young girls, those that they have abducted and others, as prospective sex slaves, as human beings to be trafficked as if they were cattle to be bartered, as recruits for child soldiers, the whole as yet another link in the chain of assaults on young women, be it through early forced marriage or violence against women in conflict zones.

Once one is touched by this kind of assault, it is impossible to return to normal. As one of the escaped Nigerian girls told CNN, while her school remains closed after the attack, even if it were open, she would not go back. The fear is too great.

We are reminded, as I said earlier when quoting my colleague, that there are 10 million young Nigerians out of school. Fear is there among the targeted and their families and, as we know, people on every continent can be targeted simply for their gender, race, religion, beliefs, and the like. Indeed, as in the case of the abducted young Nigerian girls, they were targeted simply for being who they were.

There is, of course—and one must never forget this—the counter to fear, namely courage. Here I think of the heroic young escapees who fled their abductors to be reunited with their families and who, as we meet this evening, have been bearing witness to these calamities. I know I speak for everyone in the House when I say we hope that all these schoolgirls will have the same chance to reunite with their families, to live and attend school in peace, to be free from any violence or threat of violence.

● (2330)

All this leads to the question of combatting terrorism, of protecting women and children, and what can and ought to be done.

Let me be clear on this. I view the acts of which we are speaking today as acts of terrorism, as patterned acts of terrorism over a period of time. They are acts of wanton terrorist criminality designed to intimidate those girls who seek an education in addition to afflicting harm upon those abducted. However, that does not mean that our addressing the situation must come only in the ways that one typically, albeit necessarily, associates with the combatting of terrorism rather than through a more comprehensive and inclusive set of principles and policies.

As Nicholas Kristof put it recently in the *The New York Times*:

To fight militancy, we invest overwhelmingly in the military toolbox but not so much in the education toolbox that has a far better record at defeating militancy.

He goes on:

Educating girls and empowering women are also tasks that are, by global standards, relatively doable. We spend billions of dollars on intelligence collection, counterterrorism and military interventions, even though they have quite a mixed record. By comparison, educating girls is an underfunded cause even though it's more straightforward.

As well, it would reap untold benefits.

This must be our lessons learned, our action to be taken. While we hope and pray these young women are returned, we must redouble our commitment to the protection and education of women and girls regardless. We must seek a principled foreign policy that will ensure that aid goes toward programs and initiatives that seek to empower women and provide them with the knowledge and skills they need for life. We must help in the development of the rule of law in civil society abroad, in countries such as Nigeria, to help others benefit from Canadian expertise and experience in these matters while at the same time furthering the cause of human rights for all. We must continue to combat early and forced marriages, trafficking in persons, and sexual violence in armed conflict, as has been mentioned this evening.

We must always appreciate that with respect to developing a principled set of policies, there are three foundational principles and policies we must bear in mind.

First, we must reaffirm the responsibility to protect principle, which, regrettably, the government from time to time neglects or marginalizes, though it is our international admission card in the family of nations. That is because what this principle, unanimously adopted by 192 nations in 2005, says simply but clearly is that if there is ever a situation of war crimes or crimes against humanity or ethnic cleansing or, God forbid, genocide in any country, and that country is unable or unwilling to do anything about it, then there is a responsibility on the part of the international community to protect.

That does not mean military intervention. It means a whole range of protective initiatives that can be taken. Reference has been made to them this evening. There was reference to an investment in the Global Fund for Education, to humanitarian assistance, to empowering young women and girls with the necessary resources and making sure that education is the crucial bedrock for what we do in that regard.

Second, we must make the protection of the vulnerable and the protection of children a priority. I have often quoted in the House that my daughter taught me the most important lesson I have ever learned. It is that if we want to know how to protect children and protect human rights, we should always ask ourselves at any time, in any situation, in any part of the world, such as what is happening in Nigeria, “Is it good for children?” That should inform our foreign policy, just as the protection of women must inform our foreign policy.

Therefore, as I draw to a close, I would like to quote a passage from the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in the Suresh case, which I quote as follows:

One the one hand stands the manifest evil of terrorism and the random and arbitrary taking of innocent lives, rippling out in an ever-widening spiral of loss and fear. Governments, expressing the will of the governed, need the legal tools to effectively meet this challenge.

• (2335)

The court goes on to talk about the importance of that, and I will not cite it, for reasons of time.

I will close on this point. We have to see terrorism as being fundamentally an assault on the security of democracies like Canada or Nigeria and a fundamental assault, as we have seen with regard to the young girls, on the right to the life, liberty, and security of their inhabitants.

Therefore, anti-terrorism law and policy is the promotion and protection of the security of a democracy and of the human rights of its inhabitants in the most foundational sense, but always in accordance with the rule of law—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. Questions and comments. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

• (2340)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers go out to my colleague's family on their loss. I cannot imagine how they are reconciling all their feelings about what has happened in their family. My colleague understands that deep pain and must sympathize with the families of these missing girls.

Nigeria has enormous potential. In my comments, I referred to its GDP of \$510 billion. It has enormous resources, yet that country is not investing in its own youth.

My colleague from Ottawa—Vanier talked about the tremendous disparity we saw in Abuja between rich and poor. We saw the palatial homes in Abuja, yet right outside the city was poverty at its worst.

My colleague has invested much of his life in education. I wonder if he has any thoughts on how Canada might work with the Nigerian government to help that country establish an education system for the future that would give its young people hope and opportunity.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, we have had a number of take-note debates in the House. Very recently we had a take-note debate on South Sudan. We had a take-note debate on the Central African Republic. We have been dominated by lessons on the 20th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda. There are other countries

we have not mentioned that bear involvement, such as Eritrea and Ethiopia and the like.

I mention this because there are two things about Africa. One is the enormous potential that resides in the people. Having been in Africa, I have witnessed the enormous sense of resilience and commitment and hope of the people. On the other hand, they have too often been victimized by their governments. We therefore have to make the question of Africa a priority in our foreign policy as a whole. We have to make within that policy the question of education in Africa a fundamental tenet of our foreign policy. We have to make the responsibility to protect it in all its configurations, including global investment in education, a priority as a matter of principle and policy.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I always enjoy listening to him speak because we always get a sense of his humanism.

I must say that I am very pleased that we are having this debate in the House, at our request. We know that the entire international community is rallying to find these hundreds of innocent young girls who were taken away by this terrorist group. Even though the group claims to be Islamist, I can tell you that this goes against the teachings of Islam. This group is becoming an international public enemy. We know that the group is trying to destabilize an already fragile country. It is also undermining societal life and an entire region.

Does my colleague think that it would be appropriate to ask the government to sign and ratify the UN Arms Trade Treaty in order to prevent light weapons from fuelling armed conflicts, like the one currently taking place in northern Nigeria?

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, I would like commend the NDP for this initiative that has given us the opportunity to have this debate this evening. My colleague from Etobicoke North also lobbied for this debate.

As far as the treaty is concerned, I want to reiterate that it must be ratified.

• (2345)

[*English*]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague and friend. It is a privilege to listen to him every time he speaks in the House. He is world renowned in human rights and I want to say my profound condolences to his family.

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Last fall, the government condemned the practice in certain countries of forcing young girls into marriage long before they are mentally, physically, and emotionally prepared to carry a child. I am wondering whether we should be having a discussion at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Should the government mobilize partnerships with the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and women's groups? Should it take a leadership position and back up its words with investment and make an aid commitment? Should there be complementary investments in girls' education? I would like to hear what else the member would recommend.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to my colleague and others from other parties who have expressed their condolences regarding my niece. I never spoke about this in the close to 15 years I have been here. It was the events in Nigeria that somehow brought back the recall this evening.

To the question from my colleague, I believe that we need to engage in this at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. We are engaged in this somewhat at the Foreign Affairs subcommittee. I happened to attend the United Nations when the Conservative government was dealing, among other things, with the issue of forced marriage and there was an important debate in that regard that was actually chaired by Canada at the United Nations session.

We need to bring together all the resources, domestic and international. Whether it be at parliamentary committees such as the Status of Women or the Foreign Affairs subcommittee, or whether it be within the international arena, this must be a priority in our domestic and foreign policy: the promotion and protection of the human dignity, the safety, and the security of young girls and women.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to pass on my thoughts to my colleague who shared with us a very deep personal story. I thank him for bringing that to the debate because it is personal stories and individual situations that really compel people to speak out and to be heard. I thank him for sharing that with us because I know that probably is not an easy thing to do.

On the R2P file, many countries have appointed focal points. We have seen the centre for R2P out of the United States pushing this. It might be a way to help coordinate these issues. Clearly it did not prevent what happened in Nigeria, but getting to the idea of preventing these things from happening again and the whole idea that the member has put on the floor of an R2P approach that one thing Canada could very practically do is to appoint a focal point on that issue in particular, the responsibility to protect.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I believe we do need a focal point. I would like to recommend that it be an all-party focal point. We do not have differences on this issue. It is not a partisan matter. I would also like to recommend that within that framework that we establish, as the United States has done, an atrocities prevention board that can be an inter-agency framework in that regard, and that we make the question the prevention of mass atrocities. I want to thank my colleague for introducing the motion. We just had a national day of commemoration with respect to remembrance and action in the matter of mass atrocities. We can do no worse and we can do all that needs to be done to begin with if we

establish that focal point and if we establish in conjunction with it a mass atrocities prevention board and if we make R2P in all its configurations a priority in our foreign policy.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, my thoughts are with the parents of the young girls who have been kidnapped. If they can listen to us through the Internet, they should know that we hope their daughters will be returned to them and that we fully share their sorrow.

I also cannot imagine the situation of these young women who were used to living in their village or city surrounded by their families and friends and who are now held by terrorists. Perhaps these girls were studying. I believe that they were in high school. I cannot imagine what they are going through, lost in a new environment that must seem strange and surreal. It must be a never-ending nightmare for them.

We are here, very far from Nigeria, and our reality is very different than theirs. Here, most of our girls go to university, if they want to, and can study without fear of being kidnapped or murdered. There have been some unfortunate events in our history. Nevertheless, that is nothing compared to what is happening in that country right now.

The education of a people, especially girls, is of the utmost importance. Next summer, at the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, which includes many African nations, we are going to study the education of young women and girls in primary, middle and secondary school. Our study will look at whether the global situation is stable or taking steps backwards.

Education is essential for both men and women so that they learn to take action and to respect the opposite sex as human beings with equal rights. We have the right to live and to be born, no matter our sex, colour, language or religion, and we all have the right to take our place in society. However, we are very far from that.

Nigeria committed to educating Nigerian girls. We can certainly help the country with this plan, but the current situation is more than urgent. More than anything, we need to help find these girls. We can talk about education, but in this crisis, 276 young women were kidnapped or went missing. They could be sacrificed or sold, in some way or another, into the sex trade for prostitution or marriage, without any consideration for their right to live, to be happy, to grow up and to be mothers in a normal situation. We need to help them help themselves, but we also need to support the parents of these girls.

I thank the member for Ottawa Centre for proposing this emergency debate and I thank Parliament for agreeing to hold it. New Democrats, like all Canadians, are appalled and horrified by the abduction of these young girls in northern Nigeria.

On April 14, one month ago already, 276 Nigerian schoolgirls were kidnapped. Their parents have been without their daughters and these young women have been away from their families for one month. They were kidnapped in a community in Borno. The Islamist terrorist group Boko Haram took responsibility for the attack—which is nothing remarkable or honourable for this group—in which these young Christian and Muslim girls were kidnapped.

In a statement made last week, the group's leader said that the girls would be sold on the market. Some were allegedly kidnapped to be sold into marriage to militants.

How can these terrorists do such things to young women who have absolutely nothing to do with the political situation the terrorists have put them in? What further crime against humanity has just been committed?

• (2350)

The UN Security Council just passed a resolution reiterating its commitment to involving women in peace-building efforts.

What is Canada doing to promote gender equality as it works with the Nigerian government to build a future that is free from terrorism and conflict?

Perhaps some hon. members have read historical novels about the Sabine women who were kidnapped by Romulus, one of the founders of Rome, and his followers. The women were to become their wives and help populate Rome. Unfortunately, history is repeating itself. Sometimes it seems that humanity has not evolved at all.

The Nigerian government has specifically asked for Canada's help in ensuring that the girls are safely returned to their families. The Canadian government has offered technical equipment and support personnel.

This is yet another crime against women. We keep asking the Conservatives to sign and ratify the UN Arms Trade Treaty in order to prevent small arms and light weapons from fuelling armed conflicts like the one currently taking place in northern Nigeria.

The United Nations celebrated the first anniversary of the Arms Trade Treaty, which was adopted last year by the United Nations General Assembly and which Canada has yet to sign and ratify, for fear of upsetting gun enthusiasts.

The objective of the Arms Trade Treaty is to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving

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the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms. It is also meant to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion.

On May 7, the United States announced that it was sending a dozen members of the military to Nigeria as part of the Americans' efforts to find these girls kidnapped by the extremist Islamist group Boko Haram.

The United Kingdom is sending a senior officer and advisers who will join liaison officers from the British special forces already based in the Nigerian capital of Abuja. France has sent 3,000 soldiers to the neighbouring region of the Sahel to carry out anti-terrorism activities. China has offered surveillance and intelligence support. Spain has also offered the assistance of a specialized police team.

What people are saying is that enough is enough. The international community is taking action because we do not want to see such gratuitous actions taken against innocent people. We are sick of all the violence that is once again being perpetrated against women and girls.

The march in Lagos was organized by Nigerian women—some of them the mothers of those girls—who declared:

We women will not give up on this movement. We will continue to deliver our message and put pressure on military and political authorities to do everything in their power to free these girls.

Since their rally in front of the national assembly in Abuja on Wednesday, dozens of women have organized daily four-hour sit-ins in front of the Unity Fountain in Abuja. They have said:

We feel that there has been little or no effort so far on the part of the military or the government to save the abducted girls, who are somewhere in a remote forest.

As I said, some of these women are the mothers of these girls.

Canadians want this crime to be condemned. The government has already come forward to condemn it. That is good, and we are satisfied. Now we want faster action to force the Nigerian government to do more to find these women.

• (2355)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It being midnight, I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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