



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, October 23, 2014**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 23, 2014

The House met at 10 a.m.

• (1005)

[Translation]

## PRAYER

**The Speaker:** Almighty God, we give thanks for the great blessings which have been bestowed on Canada and its citizens, including the gifts of freedom, opportunity and peace that we enjoy. We pray for our Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, and the Governor General.

[English]

Guide us in our deliberations as members of Parliament, and strengthen us in our awareness of our duties and responsibilities as members. Grant us wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to preserve the blessings of this country for the benefit of all and to make good laws and wise decisions. Amen.

We will now have a moment of silence for private reflection and meditation.

[A moment of silence observed]

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## 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 62 petitions.

\* \* \*

### NATHAN CIRILLO

**The Speaker:** I understand there have been consultations among the parties and there is agreement to hold a moment of silence at this time in memory of Nathan Cirillo.

[A moment of silence observed]

[Translation]

### EVENTS OF OCTOBER 22, 2014, IN OTTAWA

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues.

I would like to begin today by recognizing and thanking the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Papineau for their kind remarks and words of encouragement yesterday evening.

In our system, in our country, we are opponents but we are never enemies. We are Canadians, one and all.

[English]

We may sit across the aisle from one another, but when faced with attacks on the country we all love and the things we all stand for, I know we will always stand together.

• (1010)

[Translation]

Today more than ever before, I am quite pleased to see all of my colleagues from all parties in good health and good form.

[English]

Let me, Mr. Speaker, through you, provide a little bit of advice to my colleagues. I think my position and growing number of grey hairs entitles me to do this once in a while, and that is to say we all here are engaged in extremely demanding and stressful jobs, but the stress that many of you faced yesterday was really beyond and above anything that any of us are really expecting to face.

While we resume our duties, and I will talk about that in a moment, I would encourage everybody here to take care of their health. Be sure that you find some time to relax in the next little while and also, because we are not all in perfect health, if any of you are experiencing any undue physical stress as a result of what occurred yesterday, please take the time to see a physician and get that checked out.

I also want to say we heard a lot of feedback from Canadians yesterday. We are all used to the feedback we get very regularly from Canadians, much of it in the form of brickbats and some of it deserved, but in this case I think we all experienced the tremendous outpouring of warmth, affection, and good wishes from people across country, and we all thank them for this.

*Routine Proceedings*

I also want to convey all the good wishes I heard personally, not just from Canadians but from our friends outside the country. I heard from President Obama, from Prime Minister Abbott, from Prime Minister Netanyahu, and through a statement, from Prime Minister Cameron. We have heard these expressions from across the world. I think we were all, as Canadians, touched by the wonderful gesture shown last night at the Pittsburgh Penguins hockey game. So thanks to our friends in the United States and around the world for their expressions of concern.

Of course, we know all too well that this is not a happy day for everybody. In particular, it is a terribly sad day for all of the family, loved ones, friends, and colleagues of both Nathan Cirillo and Patrice Vincent.

[*Translation*]

We have seen photos of these lovely men.

[*English*]

We have all seen the pictures of these beautiful guys, as Don Cherry would say, and our hearts really are with all of them. We are so fortunate to have people like this. In the past couple of decades, we see across the world increasing places where the planet is descending into savagery, and there are people who, every day of their lives, stand on guard for this country and for all of us. We obviously want to convey our gratitude to these two servicemen and their families, but also to all the people who undertake this extremely dangerous work on behalf of our country.

I spoke of the state of much of the world, and I think for all of us who are blessed to live in a country like this, it is hard to appreciate, understand, or fathom how we can have people who are involved in a movement that so wants violence, who so despise modernity, who so hate progress that they can desire to drive out medical workers from their community, harm them; that they can enslave women, torture children; that they can kill, want to kill anyone who looks or thinks differently from them. It is in a sense beyond our comprehension, but it is very real. In this struggle in which we are engaged, in which not only our finest values must be pushed to work, so must be and will be the highest unity and resolve. They are our ultimate and indispensable weapons, and that is what these people will face.

●(1015)

[*Translation*]

With regard to the events of yesterday and in recent days, a number of questions remain and will all be answered over the course of the police security investigations. However, I can tell the House this today: the objective of both of those attacks was to spread fear and panic in our country and to interrupt the business of government. Well, honourable members, as I said yesterday, Canadians will never be intimidated.

[*English*]

We will not be intimidated. We will be vigilant, but we will not run scared. We will be prudent, but we will not panic.

As for the business of government, well, we are here, in our seats, in our chamber, in the very heart of our democracy, and our work goes on.

[*Translation*]

In all its diversity of peoples and opinions, this House personifies the spirit of Canada.

[*English*]

Canada will never yield to terrorism, and neither will this House of Commons—we carry on. We will attend to the country's affairs and we will be faithful to the trust that people have placed in us.

As I said earlier, and I have been saying for a long time, we live in a dangerous world. Terrorism has been here with us for a while, and dangerously close on a number of occasions. For example, I draw members' attention back to incidents such as the Toronto 18 and the VIA Rail conspiracy in 2013, and I could point to a number of others, as well as many that most will never know about.

For that reason, and with the belief that security in Canada is the government's primary responsibility, we have, over the years, passed such legislation as the Combating Terrorism Act and the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act to better protect Canadians and secure our institutions. Last week, our government proposed amendments to the legislation under which the Canadian Security Intelligence Service operates.

As members know, in recent weeks, I have been saying that our laws and police powers need to be strengthened in the area of surveillance, detention, and arrest. They need to be much strengthened. I assure members that work, which is already under way, will be expedited.

In conclusion, we are all aware and deeply troubled that both of this week's terrorist attacks were carried out by Canadian citizens, by young men born and raised in this peaceful country.

●(1020)

[*Translation*]

I share this concern, and I have to ask myself what sort of feeble-mindedness could lead a person to reject a nationality that so many people in so many countries would do anything to earn for their children.

[*English*]

However, that is a question for another day.

For now, make no mistake: even as the brave men and women of our armed forces are taking this fight to the terrorists on their own territory, we are equally resolved to fight it here. We live in dangerous times, yes, but the mission of our country and the work of this Parliament goes on, and so does the work throughout this city.

*Routine Proceedings*

Let me just say one final word in recognizing all the heroes of yesterday. First, I know so many. I could certainly speak personally of my staff at 24 Sussex: M. Roger Charbonneau and the chefs, Tim and Tina, who were up all night. However, I know people who were working day and night to make things as easy as possible for all of us across the country and here in Ottawa, officials who were busy at work trying to respond to the situation, first responders and citizens who put themselves in harm's way when this incident began to unfold. However, in conclusion, I acknowledge most particularly the men and women in our security services, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Armed Forces, the City of Ottawa Police. Most particularly of course, I would be very remiss if I did not acknowledge specifically the work of the security forces here on Parliament Hill and the great work of our Sergeant-at-Arms.

[Translation]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for Catherine and me to be here today, and for me to rise in this House. Yesterday, a crazed gunman came here intending to silence us, to silence the values that our country represents: peace, tolerance and diversity. He failed.

[English]

Yesterday's cowardly act was meant to shake this great city of Ottawa and indeed the entire country, but it has only hardened our resolve. It has only strengthened our commitment to each other and to a peaceful world. Let us not become more suspicious of our neighbours. Let us not be driven by fear because in Canada love always triumphs over hate.

For the family of Corporal Nathan Cirillo, may they please know that the thoughts and prayers of every single member of this House and of every single Canadian are with them today. Corporal Cirillo was a young man, just 24, with a beautiful son and a bright future ahead of him. Friends said he always had a smile on his face. That smile will be remembered by a nation.

• (1025)

[Translation]

I would also like to salute my friend, Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers. On behalf of us all, I would ask him to convey our sincere thanks and appreciation to each and every member of his team here on the Hill, the police forces and the Canadian Armed Forces. We do not yet know all of the names of yesterday's heroes, but I can say that we all witnessed heroic actions. We saw such actions right in our room: a member of Mr. Vickers' team threw himself against the door when the gunman was right outside and told us to get down even as he himself was standing in front of the door. The courage and professionalism they showed in the face of such brutality embody the best of what it means to be Canadian.

I thank our Canadian Armed Forces. This week, they experienced two unspeakable tragedies. Every day, our armed forces defend Canadian values, and today all Canadians stand united with them.

Yesterday we awoke in a land of love, diversity and peace, and today that has not changed. Here in this place, throughout Ottawa and across the country, we will conduct the nation's business as normally as possible. As the Prime Minister said, our presence here today is proof of that.

We will hold our loved ones a little bit closer, but we will not allow hatred and violence to change who we are.

As we all know, events take place here that exemplify Canada's openness and freedom.

[English]

One of my favourite examples of how this parliamentary area in and of itself becomes a symbol of the freedom and openness of this great country of ours, Canada, is that every Wednesday at noon during good weather we can see hundreds of people, multi-coloured, doing yoga on the front lawn. It is a symbol of openness and freedom. The person who came here yesterday with violence on his mind and in his gestures did not win. We cannot allow that openness and freedom to be rolled back either. We have to continue to defend both.

Today I stand here on behalf of all New Democrats and Canadians. We say that there is great solidarity here in the House and across the country. There is solidarity with the Prime Minister. These acts were driven by hatred, but also designed to drive us to hate others. That is not going to happen. We will stand up and we will stand together. We will preserve. We will persevere. We will prevail. That is what Canadians have always done together. That is what we do best together.

• (1030)

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On we go, together.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the Prime Minister and the leader of the official opposition for their strong, passionate remarks.

[English]

Yesterday's events were a shared national tragedy. It is fitting that we have come together in this place immediately to let the world know that Canada's values are strong, our institutions are resilient, and our people are united.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the victims of yesterday's tragic events. Corporal Nathan Cirillo was murdered while guarding our nation's sacred memorial to his own fallen comrades. He was unarmed.

[Translation]

Corporal Cirillo was a hero serving our country. He was also a father. Today we must not forget that a little boy has lost his father, suddenly and tragically. Let us all commit to honouring his memory.

Corporal Cirillo, much like Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent earlier this week, was killed in cold blood. Both of these attacks were cowardly and unforgivable

[English]

Should any other perpetrators or co-conspirators exist, they should be punished with the full force of our laws.

*Routine Proceedings*

I also extend my deep and sincere gratitude on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada to the brave women and men who selflessly and courageously came to our aid yesterday. Through them and their actions, we are reminded of the professionalism and dedication so often exhibited by those who protect us. I thank them.

[Translation]

We especially want to thank our Sergeant-at-Arms. His heroic deeds have been widely praised, and rightly so.

[English]

I say this through you, Mr. Speaker.

Kevin, without your courage a terrible situation would have become much worse. We are in your debt. Canadians are proud of you and they thank you.

Yesterday's attack on both our military and our most cherished democratic symbols was designed to frighten us. It was meant to embed within our minds an image of terror. It was meant to make us think differently about our surroundings and fellow citizens.

[Translation]

This act was meant to make us forget who we are. Instead, we must always remember.

•(1035)

[English]

We are a proud democracy, a welcoming and peaceful nation. We are a country of open arms, open minds, and open hearts. We are a nation of fairness, justice, and the rule of law. We will not be intimidated into changing that, by anybody. These are instead the very values and ideals upon which we must rely in the days ahead. It is in our dedication to these principles that we can set an example to the world.

[Translation]

These principles are the pillars on which the enduring foundations of our society have been built. A continued belief in these principles will guide us correctly into the future.

[English]

Let us also remember what we are up against. The individuals who committed these awful acts are not larger than life. They are not giants. They are certainly not martyrs. That is how they would like us to see them, but it is not what they are. Seeing them that way lets the fear they try to perpetuate grow.

[Translation]

Seeing them that way gives them credibility, when they do not deserve any. They are criminals, and criminals will not dictate how we act as a nation, how we govern ourselves, or how we treat each other. They will not dictate our values.

[English]

They will not make the rules about this land that we share, and they will not get to change us.

We are aware of the threats we face as a nation. We know, as we have long known, that we are not immune, nor can we guard totally

against danger in the future. What we can do is to not let these threats define us.

We need answers as to how and why this happened. They will be vital in preventing and helping to prevent any future attacks.

[Translation]

To our friends and fellow citizens in the Muslim community, Canadians know that the acts committed yesterday are criminal and not religious. They are an aberration of your faith. Continued mutual co-operation and respect will help prevent the influence of distorted ideological propaganda posing as religion.

Our Canadian values can be put to the test, but we must not forget how strong they are. We will walk forward together, not apart.

[English]

Those who carried out these attacks wanted to leave us with an image of fear and chaos. Let us remember one of strength and of hope. The image in our collective minds and shared in our hearts is one of Canadians helping and protecting Canadians, of passersby trying to save the life of a young man who gave his service to his country.

[Translation]

That is who we truly are. That is who we will continue to be.

•(1040)

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as dean of the House and on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would also like to pay tribute to the dedication and courage demonstrated by the police officers, the members of the military, the security team and all the staff of the House, all the parties, as well as our dedicated Sergeant-at-Arms.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour have the unanimous consent of the House to speak?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues.

Our thoughts, of course, are with the family of Corporal Cirillo, who unfortunately passed away. We extend our sincere condolences to his family.

Although it is difficult for us to return to work today, we must never forget that, yes, we represent the people, but we also represent democracy. We have a duty to protect this democracy and to pursue our fight so that it continues to exist and to grow.

Today, more than ever, we must continue to debate openly and transparently here in Parliament.

However, we also need to show solidarity in how we respond to terrorism, how we shape our international policy, what we do with our armed forces and how we implement security measures.

We believe in democracy and we remain vigilant. Let us act responsibly and not allow panic to prevail over good judgment.

*Routine Proceedings*

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands have the unanimous consent of the House to speak?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank all my colleagues for giving me this opportunity to speak on this very serious and grave day. We had a horrible day yesterday. I especially want to thank the Prime Minister for his words today, as well as the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party.

We are together now and always.

[*English*]

It is rare in the House to be united as we are now. We experience shared grief occasionally, such as the day we gathered to honour our colleague Jim Flaherty, but this day we have shared something far different.

All of us in different ways yesterday experienced the fear of being locked down somewhere, not knowing quite what was going on. All of us, and some of my colleagues far more than I, experienced the real terror that comes from thinking someone with a gun is on the other side of a door and they are at risk.

I know these moments are important and we should underline that there is no partisanship in the House when we are all together. In the same way, I guess that there are no atheists in fox holes, there are no political party leaders when we share a common experience of such basic fear and concern for our loved ones and for our well-being. All of us together are family. We need to feel it and say it more often. We are together in this place and our constituents need to know. We are not at war with each other, as the Prime Minister said.

Together, we work together for our country. Whatever our views are about the future of the country, whatever course we want the country to take, at a very basic level we are nothing more than human beings who at a very fundamental level care for each other. All of the people in this place are my colleagues. My colleagues must know how much I care for all of them and love them, and this is something our constituents need to know.

I cannot add anything to the eloquence of what was said, but it does need to be said again. This country lost two wonderful men this week through cold-blooded murder.

[*Translation*]

I am talking about the cold-blooded murders of Nathan Cirillo and Patrice Vincent.

•(1045)

[*English*]

These are crimes that cut to the heart of all of us. We get to know something of their lives, and we get to realize with every passing day and revealed detail of their personal lives how much we all lose as a nation when two such fine men are so senselessly and brutally killed.

We know, as I think we always knew, that our Sergeant-at-Arms is a consummate professional. He is more than a ceremonial figure. The finest thing that we could do for him right now would be to let him leave this place and go fly-fishing on the Miramichi.

In closing, I want to wish all of my colleagues and all Canadians well. I pray for one thing: that we hang on to the sense of a common, shared purpose, that we remain calm, and that we wait for answers from the police before we make any assumptions about motivations, connections or the extent of what we face.

If I were a betting person, and it is good for my bank account that I am not, I would put money on these being the acts of isolated, disturbed and deeply troubled men who were drawn to something crazy. I do not believe that it was a vast network or that the country is more at risk today than it was last week. However, that is my opinion. I can be wrong. I have been wrong before and I may be wrong again. I am undoubtedly going to be wrong again, but what I would like to suggest is that we wait for answers from the police before we make assumptions and that we speak calmly, truthfully and openly to all Canadians.

Let us be the place that exemplifies the words of our founding documents. Let us exemplify peace, order and good government.

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia have the same unanimous consent to answer?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, FD):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to speak today in this chamber where democracy is upheld.

I would like to dedicate my opening words to the memory of Nathan Frank Cirillo, who gave his life simply for representing values that Quebeckers and Canadians share, those of democracy, safety, respect and honour. I would like to express my condolences to his family and loved ones, as well as to all those who are committed to defending our ideals of peace, safety and democracy.

I would also like to commend the courage of the men and women who, from the very moment this horrible tragedy began to unfold, took action to protect the individuals and elected officials who were on Parliament Hill and in the adjacent buildings.

More specifically, I would like to recognize the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House for his heroic action. I thank him and I thank everyone who risked his or her life dealing with a killer who was prepared to do anything to take the lives of innocent people and who was specifically targeting people in uniform.

Right now, we still do not have all of the information about the investigation and we still do not know what led two men to attack soldiers and a symbol as powerful as Parliament.

What they did can only be described as madness. A desire to instill fear by bringing such abject violence into the heart of institutions that guarantee freedom, democracy and respect for the law is about as low as you can get. I cannot condemn this senseless attack strongly enough.

While it may be too early today to take stock of the tragic events of October 22 and think about what measures to take, it is not too early to state loud and clear that we believe in peace, liberty and democracy and that we will not give in to threats or terror.

*Routine Proceedings*

I see that we are all prepared to deal with this situation together, above and beyond our political allegiances. Let us focus on our strengths. Let us focus on democracy.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Ahuntsic have the unanimous consent of the House to speak?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1050)

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking all my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to speak for a few minutes.

“One may not reach the dawn save by the path of the night.” Those are the words of poet Kahlil Gibran. Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo were murdered, and let us not forget that a third soldier was wounded. They embody one of our institutions dedicated to defending our freedom and democracy. Our thoughts are with their families. They will not be forgotten.

Our eternal gratitude also goes out to the women and men who kept everyone in the House of Commons safe. A man tasked with providing that security told me one day that his role was to protect us all even at the risk of his own life. Yesterday, Mr. Vickers, you and your team were true to their word. I thank them.

Evil is striking our country and its vulnerable youth, whose minds are being poisoned daily by jihadist ideologues who blithely prey on our young people on the Internet. This type of terrorism assails the conscience of vulnerable youth that have lost their way. We must combat this with love and prevention and by defending the right to freedom, democracy, and individual rights. We must not lose our way and attack individual freedoms out of fear and turning inward.

Today, I see that we can rise above our challenges when we want to. Let us all work together with this same solidarity and love that I am feeling in the House today. Let us work together to help these young people resist the pull of these groups, to help our youth and our country.

\* \* \*

[English]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in relation to Bill S-213, an act respecting Lincoln Alexander Day.

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

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**YUKON AND NUNAVUT REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT**

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Madawaska—Restigouche, CPC)** moved that Bill S-6, an act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and the Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act, be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think if you seek it you shall find unanimous consent for the following:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, for the purposes of Standing Order 28, the House shall be deemed to have sat on Wednesday, October 22, 2014, and that any recorded division deferred to that day be further deferred to Wednesday, October 29, 2014.

• (1055)

**The Speaker:** Does the government whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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**PETITIONS**

## IRAQ

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have petitions signed by hundreds of Edmontonians who are concerned about the fate of Christians in Iraq and are particularly concerned about the serious and deteriorating situation in northern Iraq.

The petitioners call upon the government to do a number of things, among which are to help stop this tragedy, help preserve the culture of antiquity in its homeland, and take immediate action against ISIS and the violence in Iraq.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the good people of Davenport and the great city of Toronto on a number of different issues.

About 50% of all workers in Toronto cannot access permanent full-time jobs. They do not have access to pension benefits or job security. The many people who have signed this petition call upon the government to support a national urban worker strategy.

## EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition calling on the government to look at ways to extend employment insurance to the self-employed while maintaining the strength and surety of the employment insurance system today.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a number of residents in my community are still very concerned about the process of the Line 9 pipeline. The petitioners want the government to reverse its decision on the Line 9 pipeline on an urgent basis.



## DEFENCE OF CANADA MEDAL

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to table a petition with respect to the countless hours of service that many men and women gave to their country as they trained and prepared for an attack on Canadian soil during the Cold War era. These individuals, who served in the regular and reserve forces, police forces, emergency measures organizations, and civil organizations, worked to protect Canada from the threat posed by the countries behind the Iron Curtain.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to support Bill C-354, which happens to be my private member's bill, which would create a defence of Canada medal to honour these veterans of the Cold War.

## IMPAIRED DRIVING

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition that represents thousands of Canadians. The petition sadly highlights the fact that 22-year-old Kassandra Kaulius was killed by a drunk driver.

A group of people who have also lost loved ones to impaired driving, Families For Justice, believes that the impaired driving laws in Canada are much too lenient.

The petitioners call for new mandatory minimum sentencing for people who have been convicted of impaired driving causing death.

## KURDISTAN

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to introduce today.

The first petition is signed by hundreds of Canadians who represent the Canadian Kurdish population and who are concerned about the events in Kurdistan and the threats to the Kurdish people there.

The petitioners call upon Canada to do whatever it can to support the Kurdish people diplomatically and militarily by means of intelligence and arms.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by dozens of people in Vancouver Kingsway who are calling on the government to implement a national public transit strategy.

The petitioners want permanent investment to support public transit and want federal funding mechanisms established for it in our country.

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition calls on the Government of Canada to do whatever it can to ensure home mail delivery for all Canadians who want it, particularly the disabled and the elderly, who require direct home mail delivery.

## Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

## CBC/RADIO-CANADA

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the great honour of presenting, on behalf of dozens of Sherbrooke residents, a petition concerning the CBC's future. A number of signatories to the petition are calling for more stable, multi-year and adequate funding for our public broadcaster, which is experiencing difficulties because of the restructuring currently taking place. They are therefore asking the government to provide stable and more predictable funding to the crown corporation, so that it can fulfill its mandate properly.

## LOCAL ECONOMY

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by more than 200 people from my riding to support buying local, the local economy and farmers from our region. They are asking the government to establish a nationwide buy-local strategy and a local procurement policy within all federal institutions.

• (1100)

[English]

## 41ST GENERAL ELECTION

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from Canadians across Canada calling for an inquiry to take place into the so-called robocall scandal in the election of 2011. The petitioners note that we still do not have answers as to who coordinated and organized that attempt to reduce voter turnout.

## PROSTITUTION

**Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition with dozens of signatures from people who are calling upon Parliament to legislate that it be a criminal offence to purchase sex or to pimp in this country.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statements, government orders will be extended by 44 minutes.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**WAYS AND MEANS**

## ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 2

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC)** moved that a ways and means motion to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014, and other measures be concurred in.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Call in the members.

• (1140)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 256)***YEAS**

## Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Baird
Barlow	Bateman
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dreeschen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring

Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lauzon
Lebel	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poilievre	Preston
Raiitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
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)
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 148

**NAYS**

## Members

Andrews
Atamanenko
Bélangier
Bennett
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Charlton
Choquette
Cleary
Côté
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseau
Eyking
Fortin
Freeman
Garneau
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Grogg
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes

*Government Orders*

Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stoffer	Sullivan
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau
Turnel	Valeriote
Vaughan— 121	

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC)** moved that Bill C-43, A Second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures be read the first time and printed.

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

\* \* \*

**NÁÁTS'IHCH'OH NATIONAL PARK RESERVE ACT**

The House resumed from October 2 consideration of the motion that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act (Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve of Canada), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill S-5. I call on all members to support the passage of the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve act in order to expand Canada's world-class national park system.

In light of the events of yesterday, it is fitting that the first bill in the House of Commons today is about a national park, a place of sanctity and peace that affords all Canadians an opportunity and a location to enjoy wide open spaces in Canada's great outdoors.

The purpose of Bill S-5 is to establish for all time Canada's newest national park and to pass on to future generations an amazing landscape located in the southwest corner of the Northwest Territories. Not only will this area be protected in the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve but it will be available to generations of visitors

to explore and to generations of aboriginal people who can continue their traditional ways of life that date back to time immemorial.

This is the 44th time in the history of our country that a conscious decision has been made to protect a nationally significant Canadian landscape for all time. I hope all members of Parliament, all members in the House, will voice their support for the bill to create the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve.

Our government is a global leader in the creation of new national parks in protected areas. Since 2006, our government has added an area twice the size of Vancouver Island to the network of federally protected areas.

The Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve will protect a representative example of the Mackenzie Mountains and wildlife, including mountain caribou, grizzly bears, moose, Dall sheep, and a host of other species, for future generations.

It has been achieved through the hard work of northerners, including the government of the Northwest Territories, the Sahtu Dene, and the Métis, in support of the goals of the national conservation plan to protect, and connect Canadians to, our natural areas, as announced by our Prime Minister.

Bill S-5 will set in law the boundary of Nááts'ihch'oh by amending Schedule 2 of the Canada National Parks Act. The boundary was selected to achieve key conservation gains, including the protection of the upper reaches of the South Nahanni River as well as habitat for caribou, grizzly bears, sheep, and moose while allowing for some development of existing mineral claims and leases for potential future mineral development.

The boundaries of the proposed park reserve are the product of a broad process of collaboration and consultation. Hundreds of individuals shared views on the proposed boundaries. Representatives of aboriginal groups, territorial governments, mining companies, and other federal departments were also consulted and they participated.

The boundary will protect 70% of the South Nahanni River watershed within the Sahtu settlement area while leaving 70% of the area with high mineral potential outside the park. As a result, it will provide for conservation values and a visitor experience without blocking access to significant areas with high mineral potential. Visitors will now be able to paddle the South Nahanni River from the Moose Ponds to Nahanni National Park Reserve within the boundary.

*Government Orders*

In August 2012, the Prime Minister travelled to the Northwest Territories to join aboriginal leaders in announcing the establishment of the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve. Since then, at the request of the Sahtu Dene and the Métis, an area of about 20 square kilometres, extending to the south shore of O'Grady Lake, has been added to the park, in part to facilitate visitor access to the park. With the protection of an additional 4,895 square kilometres of lands and waters in Nááts'ihch'oh, our government has effectively expanded the original boundary of Nahanni sevenfold, to the point that it and Nááts'ihch'oh are the third largest national park complex in Canada.

● (1145)

Globally, this is among the most significant national park expansions. In combination with Nahanni National Park Reserve, 86% of the entire South Nahanni River watershed is now protected forever. The boundary for the expanded Nahanni and the newly established Nááts'ihch'oh will include habitat that will protect up to 600 grizzly bears. This is nine times more than the number of grizzly bears protected within Banff National Park, Canada's first national park.

The establishment of Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve has been achieved with the collaboration of the Sahtu Dene and Métis. Two years ago, the Government of Canada and the Sahtu Dene and Métis signed an impact benefit plan that spelled out how the Nááts'ihch'oh would be collaboratively operated and managed. The plan aims to ensure that the national park reserve provides lasting economic, cultural, and social benefits to aboriginal and northern communities and that it drives growth and prosperity without jeopardizing fragile ecosystems and ongoing traditions.

Ongoing employment to operate Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve will include a combination of seasonal and full-time staff. These employees will be hired among the Sahtu Dene and Métis in the Tulita district. This will allow for a positive economic contribution from the government to support sustainable employment for northerners.

Our government has struck an important balance in this region with the dedication of almost 35,000 square kilometres of northern wilderness and wildlife habitat to national park status for all time while continuing to allow access to resources that are important to the regional and national economy. The bill before us would continue to allow the mining industry to use several specific mineral access roads to access their existing mineral claims.

The Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve has been achieved with the support of the government of the Northwest Territories. This legislation is being passed less than a year after Canada and the Northwest Territories reached a historic devolution agreement, with the transfer of the administration and control of land and resources to the territorial government. Once it is established, I am confident that both governments will continue to collaborate to ensure that any development on lands outside the park will not have an impact on the national park values we are seeking to protect through Bill S-5.

The Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve has received overwhelming support from stakeholder groups, leaders, community members, and local and regional governments in the area. All first nations and Métis who have settled or asserted claims in the area, as well as stakeholder groups, were invited to consultations. Meetings

with leaders and community members from several communities in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon were also conducted. Of the over 1,600 individuals who participated in the consultation process, over 96% indicated that they supported the creation of this park.

Bill S-5 delivers on our government's commitment in the 2013 Speech from the Throne to protect Canada's rich natural heritage by, in part, completing the work to protect the wilderness lands of the Nááts'ihch'oh by 2015. Plans are also progressing to dedicate two additional national parks that were also mentioned in the throne speech: a new national park on Bathurst Island in Nunavut and a new national park reserve in the Mealy Mountains of Labrador.

I want to congratulate the hon. member for Nunavut, who is also the Minister of the Environment and minister responsible for Parks Canada, on her August 2014 announcement that our government has designated and protected the 20,000 square kilometre Nunavut-based national park under the Canada National Parks Act. The minister's statement at the time is worth repeating, and equally applies to Bill S-5. I quote:

Our Government is committed to ensuring our natural heritage and rich biodiversity is protected for all Canadians today and into the future. Canada's North is home to the world's most spectacular scenery and pristine wilderness and I'm tremendously pleased to be announcing [the park] will be protected for future generations. This final step, that supports our Government's National Conservation Plan, marks the completion of years of hard work and dedication of many Northerners.

● (1150)

In closing, Bill S-5 will protect Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve under the Canada National Park Act.

When Parliament first passed this act in 1930, it included a dedication clause that still resonates today. It states:

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

This statement of purpose will apply to Nááts'ihch'oh once Bill S-5 passes.

Over the decades, previous Parliaments have enacted legislation that has left us with the enduring legacy of unimpaired national parks, such as Jasper, Fundy, Prince Edward Island, Grasslands, and Gros Morne. We know these incredible parks are some of our most treasured places that we have visited, or hope to visit some day, so that we can expand our personal understanding of the beauty of our country. This includes one such gift, Kluane National Park, in my home riding of the Yukon Territory. The history of the people who came to settle these areas and the connection that aboriginal and local communities have with the land in these regions are important to us.

The protection of the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve, with its bears, caribou, Dall sheep, and trumpeter swans, is this Parliament's natural legacy gift to future generations. For generations to come, people will visit and be inspired by the lands of Nááts'ihch'oh. We trust that it will be passed on to successive generations unimpaired.

*Government Orders*

Please join me, not only in supporting Bill S-5 but in passing this new national park, for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations, and for all Canadians.

• (1155)

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking later to indicate NDP support for this bill, but I do have a question for the member. He is probably aware that in 2013, in the report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development on the ecological integrity of national parks, the commissioner raised some concerns about the state of repair of many national parks.

I wonder if the member could comment on whether the government is prepared to commit the resources and staffing required to make sure that this park can be the best possible park.

**Mr. Ryan Leef:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. member for her question and her support for this bill. I certainly look forward to hearing her speak later today on this important topic.

The member will know that in the recent budget, our government committed millions of dollars for the upkeep and infrastructure development of our national parks, not only to make them safe but to preserve them for future generations, to make them accessible and enjoyable, to generate visitors, and in turn spur revenue through those visits to our national parks. We have made significant investments in infrastructure development to make sure that all parks across Canada are safe, accessible, and secure locations that welcome visitors to them on every day of every month of every year.

I hope that the NDP will consider those investments, consider the budget implementation we are doing to engage those investments, and will find a way to support us through those budgets so that our national parks are our lasting legacies for years to come.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is worth noting that throughout Canada, in virtually all regions, we have a great deal of beauty in terms of our natural lands and, in northern Canada, vast amounts of land. We acknowledge how important it is that we look to where we can capitalize on the recognition of our parks. In every region, we have a high demand for not only putting into place national parks, but there are also the concerns that come with that.

My colleague from the New Democratic Party made reference to the importance of resources, which is of critical importance. I know that up north there is a great deal of concern with respect to the whole issue of water management and how that can be dealt with. Our national parks play a role in issues such as that.

I wonder if the member would provide comment regarding how our national parks play a valuable role that goes beyond the preservation and promotion of nature and wilderness, and also contribute to the benefit of our communities across Canada to deal with strategies for water and other natural resources.

**Mr. Ryan Leef:** Mr. Speaker, each national park has a park management plan, and they look at all aspects, from wildlife protection and land-based issues to water-based issues.

The member raises a good point. This park is a great example of where we are protecting water headways. The starting points, the headways of these major river systems, often require great

protection. In the South Nahanni River country, part of this park will preserve headwaters of some major river systems.

We have dedicated, capable, qualified staff, who work within each of these parks. They develop very comprehensive water management plans, land use management plans, and wildlife management plans. We are very fortunate in our country to have such qualified and capable people working within our national park system, to make sure they are not operating solely as an entity within the national park but within the broader perspective of the communities that surround those parks. This is because of wildlife, transboundary water flowing in and out of national parks, and forest and ecosystems sharing the park both inside and outside of park boundaries.

It is incumbent upon the great staff who work in these national parks to know this, in order to work in a flexible nature with their partners in the surrounding communities and regions, and with their provincial or territorial counterparts.

They do a great job. Our government is more than happy to support them in every way that we can. I am very much looking forward to seeing the expansion of this park, and the continued protection of our waterways, our land, and our wildlife resources.

• (1200)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I particularly want to thank my colleague from the Yukon. It is appropriate today to take the opportunity to thank him for his public service. We all know in the House of his work with the RCMP and Correctional Service Canada.

I also want to thank my colleagues in the opposition who are working with us to make parks in Canada a wonderful priority.

As the member for the Yukon, the member knows first-hand that one of the greatest things about our country is our great outdoors. Our Conservative government's record is clear and unprecedented. We have protected land that is two times the size of Vancouver Island. We have created three national wildlife areas, three marine protected areas, two national parks, two national marine conservation areas, and one historic site.

Why it is so important to now establish the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve?

**Mr. Ryan Leef:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hard-working parliamentary secretary for all of the work that he does. He is obviously keenly aware of the significance, not only of this park but of all of the initiatives that our government has undertaken. He also has the advantage of working with the hard-working Minister of the Environment, who not only understands these issues very well but lives the issues. She was born in Nunavut, with the wild and open spaces, and she has a deep appreciation for what national parks and open spaces bring to Canadians, both from urban and rural settings.

On that note, we have made expansions to this national park. They are timely, and this is an excellent opportunity for us to build on our tremendous record. We are doing this at the exact time that we are opening national parks in large urban areas, as with the Rouge River national park.

*Government Orders*

We are trying to connect Canadians as part of our national conservation plan, to restore their connection to nature, give them opportunities that they have not had in the past, and to give them spaces to explore. It is perfect for the health of our ecosystem, and our land, wildlife, and water, as some of the members opposite have touched on. It is also important for the people of Canada and the health of Canadians. It is important for the health and well-being of future generations of Canadians, and indeed our country's identity.

I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary, not only for his question, but for his hard work, and the Minister of the Environment as well.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned my park, which is the park that is closest to home for me, in Scarborough—Rouge River. That is the Rouge River national urban park which is about to be created.

I see a very similar pattern. The community and local people have asked for a larger park, a larger part of the naturally occurring ecosystems to be protected, and the government has suggested a smaller park. That is what happened with the Rouge park, and that is what I am learning is also happening with the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve. Over 90% of the public in the area who were consulted requested that a larger land assembly be included in the park, and the final decision put forward by the government is actually the smallest possible area of land to be protected.

Especially considering that it is at the headwaters of the waterways, why is it that the government is putting forth the smallest possible land assembly for this park reserve?

• (1205)

**Mr. Ryan Leef:** Mr. Speaker, this is a seven-fold expansion, just shy of 5,000 additional square kilometres to the existing park. This is not insignificant.

Of course, there are people who would have liked the park to be larger. However, we had over 1,600 direct consultations, and, of those, 1,600, 96%, were in support of the park plan that we laid out.

We have an obligation as government to ensure that we balance all Canadians' interests in these issues, be they in the urban centre or in rural remote Canada. There are many stakeholders with vested interests in these regions in the country, and we have struck a balance between all the user groups' interests and user groups' needs, which is very important. We need a broad range of support from all Canadians when we undertake these initiatives

While we understand the direct importance of protection of land areas, we have to ensure that we strike that perfect balance with the opportunity for access for other uses. I think we have done that quite well, and I am proud that almost 5,000 square kilometres will be added to the park.

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will enthusiastically encourage all fellow members of the House to join me in supporting Bill S-5, the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve act. As my colleague from Yukon has reminded the House, this legislation would protect unparalleled wilderness lands in the Northwest Territories, about 5,000 square km, which is an area only a little smaller than the entire province of Prince Edward Island.

In August 2012, I had the honour of travelling with the Prime Minister to Norman Wells in the Northwest Territories to announce the establishment of Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve. The name of the proposed national park reserve comes from North Slavey, an aboriginal language. The word means "pointed like a porcupine quill" and refers to the shape of Mount Wilson, which is a peak that looms over a series of moose ponds in the proposed reserve, which are the headwaters for the world-famous South Nahanni River. Aboriginal people consider this mountain sacred. They have lived off the surrounding lands for millennia.

The establishment of Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve completes the ongoing work to significantly expand the Nahanni National Park Reserve and to conserve a significant portion of the South Nahanni River watershed. In short, Canada has expanded the boundary of Nahanni to the point that it is the third-largest national park complex in the country. This expansion, the largest in Canada's history, would build on our country's strong tradition of national parks and our international leadership in conservation.

The boundaries of the proposed park reserve are the product of a broad process of collaboration and consultation. Hundreds of individuals, over a number of years, shared their views on the proposed boundaries. Representatives of aboriginal groups, territorial governments, regional community corporations, mining companies, and other federal departments were also brought into the consultations.

Ultimately, the proposed boundaries would achieve key conservation gains, such as protecting the upper reaches of the South Nahanni River and habitat for woodland caribou and grizzly bear. They would provide for conservation values and visitor experience without blocking access to significant areas with high mineral potential. The proposed boundaries would also ensure that the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve would protect nearly 4,900 square kilometres of the Sahtu Dene and Métis settlement area of the Northwest Territories.

The legislation before us would also support Canada's national conservation plan, announced recently by the Prime Minister. The plan proposes to contribute to Canada's long-term prosperity by taking concrete action in three priority areas: conserving our lands and waters, restoring ecosystems, and connecting Canadians to nature. The establishment of Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve would support each one of these three priorities. It would conserve a beautiful landscape located in the southwest corner of the Northwest Territories and, as my friend reminded us, along the Yukon border.

Given its remote location, this land fortunately remains largely unspoiled. The protections afforded through the legislation now before us would ensure that these lands and waters would continue to be enjoyed for many generations to come. The massive expansion of protected areas in this part of Canada would also help preserve a unique ecosystem. With the addition of Nááts'ihch'oh, more than 85% of the South Nahanni watershed would be protected. Today, this region features habitat for mountain woodland caribou, grizzly bear, Dall sheep, mountain goats, and trumpeter swans. During the all-too-short summers, the fields burst into life as wildflowers bloom and insects buzz over a thick carpet of moss, grass, and shrubs.

*Government Orders*

•(1210)

Creating the new park reserve would mean that more than 10% of Canada's north would be managed as protected areas for the benefit of Canadians, for the benefit of aboriginals, and for the benefit of local communities. In total, the north would have 11 national parks, 6 national wildlife areas, and 16 migratory bird sanctuaries. The total area would include nearly 400,000 square kilometres, an area about the size of Newfoundland and Labrador, which I think is quite a legacy for future generations.

Given its timeless beauty and abundance of flora and fauna, it is no wonder that aboriginal people have long felt a deep connection with this part of their north. A particularly spiritual place to the Sahtu Dene and the Métis people is the mountain that towers above the Moose Ponds on the upper South Nahanni River.

Creating the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve would mean these lands would also attract visitors from outside the north. People would come from across Canada, we hope, to see the spectacular landscapes of the upper reaches of the world-famous South Nahanni River. Visitors would also be able to hike, canoe, raft, and climb in the new Nááts'ihch'oh and the recently expanded Nahanni national park reserves.

The establishment of Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve would demonstrate to Canadians that this government understands the importance of protecting wilderness, while continuing to make it accessible for people domestically and from around the world.

The bill would also provide the Minister of the Environment with the powers to permit two pre-existing mineral access roads through a small part of the national park reserve and to enforce the necessary measures to ensure that the environment is protected where required. These road provisions are exactly what Parliament approved in 2009 when it passed legislation to expand Nahanni National Park Reserve sixfold. There is a mineral access route contemplated in the northwestern part of Nahanni that travels north into the new Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve, and Bill S-5 would simply extend the minister's powers to permit that part of the road within Nááts'ihch'oh.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has indicated that there are processes now in place, should any development be proposed for lands adjacent to the new national park reserve, so that there will be environmental assessment, including public hearings, under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has stated many times and very clearly that it has a very rigorous system of oversight and practice with regard to the protection of the environment. Even with the proposed park boundary, any adjacent development would be subject to a very thorough review in the context of maintaining and protecting the park.

The bill is, I believe, a concrete example of the action we are taking within the northern strategy, which proposes a responsible approach to development, one that balances environmental protection with social and economic development, one that empowers northerners and exercises Canada's sovereignty in the north. People would have an active role in managing this new national park

reserve, which would help build capacity and, at the same time, strengthen northern governance.

I would hope, in closing, that hon. members would join me in supporting Bill S-5, Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve act.

•(1215)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech.

In regard to the importance of creating parks, we have signed the Aichi targets, which require us to increase protected areas. The national conservation plan created by the Conservatives with the participation of the New Democrats is a plan that could go in the right direction but, once again, its implementation has been delayed, and that is unfortunate.

I am especially concerned about the species at risk, as well as the flora and fauna. I was involved in quite a file dealing with the belugas in Cacouna. My colleague said that a number of species, including grizzly bears and Dall sheep, were going to be protected but, in fact, the vast majority of the critical habitat is outside the proposed park. That habitat will therefore not even be protected. How does he explain the fact that on the one hand he says that these species will be protected, but on the other, he has not even included the critical habitat, the vast majority of which is outside the park?

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

[*English*]

I think that the breadth of the member's original question, before focusing on the protection of flora and fauna, particularly wildlife and all its forms in the new Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve, makes it a complicated and very large question.

There is the creation and stewardship of both our traditional national parks and our new national park reserves and marine protected areas on all three coasts in very different parts of the country. There is the new Sable Island National Park Reserve, the proposed Rouge national urban park reserve within the outskirts of the Greater Toronto Area, and of course, Nááts'ihch'oh, which is a remote, still largely unsullied part of our great natural spaces in the north. They face a number of challenges in terms of designing the national park plan for each individual park, such as ensuring that there is reasonable accessibility for visitors and considering highways as well as a variety of civilization infrastructure realities, such as power lines and so forth.

Parks Canada is world renowned. In my travels around the world, in almost every situation when visiting a protected national space abroad, I have heard from the administrators of these parks of their great admiration for the work of Parks Canada.

In regard to the protected species within Nááts'ihch'oh national park, great care has been taken, because Nááts'ihch'oh has a very important part to play in the life and continued existence of the woodland caribou. On the calving grounds, both the Sahtu and Dene people, the Northwest Territories, and wildlife authorities have advised protecting these birthing grounds, and I can assure my colleague that they would be protected under this legislation.

*Government Orders*

• (1220)

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Thornhill. Obviously, as we heard from both his speech and his answers to questions in the House, he has a tremendous amount of knowledge about this park. He has done a tremendous amount of work to get us to this point, and I would like to thank him for that.

The member mentioned early in his speech that he was present in Norman Wells to make the announcement about this, and I was pleased to be able to join him there. Could my hon. colleague talk about what the community atmosphere was like when we were there to do that? What was the reception like and how did the community feel?

These are very important issues to bring to the House of Commons during this debate, because we were there as the announcement was made and we saw the enthusiasm. If the member could share his personal perspective and talk about how the people there felt, I think it would provide some value to this debate.

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to travel in the northern reaches of our country with the hon. member for Yukon.

The work to create this additional protected space adjacent to the great Nahanni National Park Reserve has taken many years and extensive consultations with all of the groups that I mentioned in my speech, including the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the regional community corporations, and equally important, the people who have lived on this land for thousands of years, the Sahtu Dene and Métis peoples. In their negotiations, they had a variety of views on exactly what needed to be protected and how it should be protected.

I can assure members of the House that there were many versions of the ultimate map designating exactly what the boundaries of the park would be, including the protected areas, the spiritually relevant areas of the park, and the areas relevant to protecting wildlife and biodiversity, as I mentioned in a previous answer to a colleague on the other side of the House.

At the Prime Minister's announcement in Norman Wells not far from the new park, which still requires infrastructure to be developed to allow easier access, there was great joy and satisfaction that all of the considerations necessary to create a new national park had been recognized in the spirit of co-operation and collaboration.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government has chosen the smallest of the options that were available. There is extreme concern, because the government seems to have listened more to the mining industries and to those wanting to develop than to those who are looking at sustainable economic activity in the area.

My colleague spoke about the wildlife and so on a while ago. Given the boundaries around this area, can he guarantee that there will be no mineral development along the Little Nahanni River around the boundaries of that park?

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I can answer the concerns raised by my colleague in her well-reasoned and thoughtful question.

Sometimes we think only in the context of our great traditional centuries-old national parks and the protections that have continued over the decades, but we must realize that with the creation of any new national park, the Government of Canada and Parks Canada are not the sole decision-makers in these matters. We are in partnership with governments, in this case the Government of the Northwest Territories, with the various communities of the north, and, as my colleague mentioned, with the input of those organizations and companies that this government believes are responsible for helping to build the economic vitality of not just the urban south but of the north.

I salute the ambition of those among us who would make our entire northern lands into one great national park reserve with no development. However, it is the responsibility not only of the Government of Canada but also the people of Canada, the provinces and territories, and local governments to consider exactly the balance between environmental protection of our special places and reasonable social and economic development. The legislation now before us speaks to exactly that balance.

• (1225)

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, as other members have done, I would like to convey condolences to the families of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo.

Today, I am rising to speak to Bill S-5, an act to amend the Canada National Parks Act with regard to the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve of Canada. In an earlier exchange with the member for Yukon, I indicated that New Democrats will be supporting this bill. It is very important to get the bill to committee to review after second reading.

I am going to quote some background information from the legislative summary to put this bill into context:

The bill amends the Canada National Parks Act to establish Nááts'ihch'oh... National Park Reserve of Canada in the Northwest Territories. The park reserve, which measures 4,895 km<sup>2</sup>, is located in the northern one sixth of the South Nahanni River watershed in the Northwest Territories, adjacent to and to the northwest of the existing Nahanni National Park Reserve.

Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve is situated entirely in the Tulita District of the Sahtu Settlement Area. It is being established as a park reserve rather than as a park in accordance with the stipulation in the Canada National Parks Act that "[p]ark reserves are established ... where an area or a portion of an area proposed for a park is subject to a claim in respect of aboriginal rights that has been accepted for negotiation by the Government of Canada." It is not until "outstanding Aboriginal claims have been settled and all necessary agreements are reached that provide for the park's establishment [that] the park reserve is given national park status."

The South Nahanni River watershed is an important cultural, spiritual and natural area for the First Nations and Métis peoples of the Sahtu Settlement Area, Dehcho Region and eastern Yukon. It is home to several important species, including grizzly bears, woodland caribou, Dall's sheep and Canada's northernmost populations of mountain goat and hoary marmot. The Sahtu Dene and Métis peoples of the region have long recommended that the area that will form this park reserve be conserved.

The legislative summary goes on to discuss the path to creating the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve of Canada:



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The Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve will complete the protection offered by the national parks system to the Greater Nahanni ecosystem. Nahanni National Park Reserve, which is situated in the Dehcho Region, was created in 1972, in large part to prevent the construction of a hydroelectric project at Virginia Falls. Initially the Nahanni park reserve covered about one seventh of the Greater Nahanni ecosystem. At the time, research indicated that, in this area with many competing land uses and with most of the water in the park reserve coming from outside its boundaries, a larger park would better protect the ecological integrity of the ecosystem. In 2009, Nahanni National Park Reserve's size was increased six-fold within the Dehcho Region.

To expand protection of the greater Nahanni ecosystem into the adjacent Sahtu Settlement Area, in 2007, Parks Canada approached the Sahtu Dene and Métis peoples of the Tulita District. The negotiation process and requirements for creating a new park or park reserve within the Sahtu Settlement Area are defined in chapter 16 of the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1993). The purpose of such parks is:

to preserve and protect for future generations representative natural areas of national significance, including the wildlife resources of such areas, and to encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of such areas, while providing for the rights of the participants under this agreement to use such areas for the harvesting of wildlife and plants.

In addition to affirming various traditional rights and uses, the agreement states, "Exploration for and development of minerals shall not be permitted within a national park, except as may be required for construction purposes within the park."

As part of the process of creating a park reserve under the agreement, an impact benefit plan was required to lay out "the relationship between the Sahtu Dene and Metis and Parks Canada for managing a national park reserve." A memorandum of understanding for negotiating the impact benefit plan was signed in April 2008.

While a number of competing uses for the land, including outfitting and sport hunting, were proposed for the park reserve, the most contentious issue was mining and mineral exploration.

I will come back to this point in a moment.

I want to comment for a moment on the process, and for this I am referring to Wikipedia, because it had a very succinct description of the process. It says:

Following the announcement, three plans for the park boundaries were proposed. The region is known for its mineral potential, and mining companies were concerned that the park would limit their access to these minerals. The first scenario would have made the park 6,450 square kilometres, protected 94 per cent of the upper watershed of the South Nahanni River, 95 percent of the grizzly bear habitat and 81 percent of the woodland caribou summer habitat, leaving 20 per cent of the overall mineral potential outside of the park's boundaries and potentially available for development. The Government of Canada chose the third option for the final park boundary that leaves 70 per cent of the overall mineral potential outside the park while retaining 70 percent of the grizzly bear habitat and 44 percent of the summer calving grounds of the woodland caribou herd within the park boundary." During negotiations, concerns were raised about the impact that mining the region would have on the South Nahanni watershed. ...

●(1230)

In reviewing these three options, I want to refer to Parks Canada's own consultation process. This was the final consultation report from August 30, 2010.

In that report, one of the things that happened was that participants were asked to indicate what their preference was of the options that had been proposed. Although only three options were presented for choosing a preference, there was actually a fourth option, but only three options were indicated as preferences.

Option number one, which is not the preference that was chosen by the government, had 92.3% of participants indicate that this was the option that they would prefer. Option number two had 4.6%, and

option number three had only 3.1%. We can see that participants in the consultation overwhelmingly favoured that first option.

From that final report, I want to refer to some of the findings from the consultations with aboriginal peoples in the Sahtu region.

The report states:

A frequently expressed comment in the Sahtu region consultations was that it does not make sense to have a national park reserve if you also allow mining to exist in the watershed. Participants stated their distrust of the mining industry and the environmental assessments to protect the natural environment concerned, that the impacts of mining would be harmful to the watershed downstream. It was suggested by participants that protecting the water should be a higher priority than obtaining the employment and financial benefits of mining (seen as small benefits). While some participants saw a balance of economic and conservation values as beneficial (e.g. Option 1 was seen to accommodate miners to keep their leases and Sahtu to protect the watershed and animals), many others felt that mining should not be allowed at all in the watershed. It was suggested that the key concern in deciding on the boundary should be the conservation of wildlife and water.

The beauty and importance of the Naats'ihch'oh area was highlighted by many consultation participants in the Sahtu. They stated that the area was very important to peoples of the Sahtu, Dehcho and Kaska (Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation, Yukon). One Tulita Elder described the mountain itself (Naats'ihch'oh) as sacred to these peoples; it has been used to teach and to heal. "This area has power... powerful medicine. The area is so powerful that it will heal you...used in the past to heal people before white medicine. For these reasons we don't want to lose this area to development and it should become a park."

Of course, there were many other pieces of input with regard to the consultation, but that very succinctly sums up what the Sahtu peoples were talking about in terms of preservation of the area.

Further on in the public consultation report, there was an analysis of the proposed options. It states:

...Option 1 was seen as the best way to facilitate maximum protection of the watershed and habitat of the important species, while also accommodating resource potential in the park. A number of the participants who preferred Option 1 qualified this choice by indicating that Option 1 represented the next best approach to protection of the entire South Nahanni River watershed and preferred that mining leases be bought out. They also indicated that if mining activities are allowed in the vicinity of the park reserve in the upper watershed of the South Nahanni River, the most stringent environmental controls and management should be applied.

We can see clearly that the participants in the study preferred option number one. They talked about what needed to be in place in order to preserve this very important area, an area that is important economically, spiritually, and culturally. Part of the concern that the member for Northwest Territories raised when he gave his speech here in the House was that despite the consultations and the preference from people in the region, this was not the option that was selected.

In addition, the member raised some concerns with regard to the funding and resources needed to support the development of this park and to protect its integrity in the longer run, and in this connection I want to refer to the report from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development that was tabled in this House in the fall of 2013. This report was on ecological integrity in national parks.

●(1235)

In the introduction of this report, one of the things that the commissioner did was outline the benefits that national parks provide, and these include the following:

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...serve as storehouses of biological diversity, including species at risk...; provide vital functions in the ecosystem, such as carbon sequestration, stormwater surge protection, freshwater filtration, and pollination; provide benchmarks for researchers to compare undisturbed ecosystems within national parks against lands outside of national parks that have been subject to human activities; and protect areas so that the present and future generations will have opportunities to connect with nature, appreciate natural heritage, and support its conservation.

In the report from the commissioner, she raised a number of concerns. I am going to focus on the resources for maintaining ecological integrity because that is one of the concerns that has been raised, whether those resources would be available. The commissioner, in paragraph 7.68, found that overall spending on heritage resources conservation decreased by 15% in the 2012-13 fiscal year, compared with the average of the preceding six years, with further reductions planned as part of decisions flowing from the 2012 federal budget. The planned staffing numbers in heritage resources conservation were reduced by 23% in the 2013-14 fiscal year, compared with the average of the previous seven years. More specifically, staffing in the science work stream was reduced by 33% during this period, as 60 of 179 positions were eliminated.

The report also found that the number of positions that are seasonal increased from 37% to almost 60% in 2013-14 fiscal year. This exacerbates the impact of the reduction in the number of positions because seasonal staff work for only part of the year. Further on in that same report where the concerns were being raised, we find that the spending on heritage Canada resources conservation of Parks Canada has recently decreased by 15%, and it goes on to cite some of the same numbers.

However, it states that Parks Canada has not clarified how and by when, with significantly fewer resources, the agency will address the backlog of unfinished work, the emerging threats to ecological integrity, and the decline in the condition of 34% of park ecosystems that it has identified. As a consequence, "there is a significant risk that the Agency could fall further behind in its efforts to maintain or restore ecological integrity in Canada's national parks" system.

Earlier, when I posed a question to the member for Yukon, with regard to whether the government would commit sufficient resources in order to ensure that the ecological integrity of the proposed park reserve would be maintained, the member referenced the budget announcement, and I just want to put some facts on the table.

First, Parks Canada identified aging infrastructure and inadequate levels of funding in maintenance as a key risk for the department in its November 2013 departmental performance report. The departmental performance report also showed that over \$17 million in approved funding for heritage resources conservation and \$22 million in townsite and throughway infrastructure funding was allowed to lapse in the 2012-13 period.

When we were talking about the budget, the member was correct when he indicated that the budget announced \$391 million over five years to deal with crumbling buildings, roads, and dams. However, what he did not indicate was that, first, the amount would not cover the backlog, but more importantly, because the money is being phased in over five years, in 2014 only \$1 million would be spent, in 2015 \$4 million would be spent, and the bulk of the money, \$386 million, would be spent after the next federal election.

We have been seeing these kinds of smoke-and-mirrors budget announcements in any number of areas. I am the aboriginal affairs critic for the New Democrats. We saw an education announcement that indicated that most of the money would flow after the next federal election.

Therefore, this is another one of those cases of "Trust me; the cheque is in the mail". It is important to note that money is not a slam dunk. If the government really does want to support the development of this park reserve, if it really does want to support the peoples of the region, it needs to indicate, very clearly, its intention to ensure that money will flow.

● (1240)

Again, New Democrats are wholeheartedly behind the creation of this park reserve. We are wholeheartedly in support of the bill moving forward and making sure it happens expeditiously. Members will know that this has been a long time in the making and it is well past the time that we do this preservation.

However, a number of other organizations have also raised concerns and I will refer to the CPAWS Northwest Territories analysis. In its analysis, it indicated:

Protecting the South Nahanni watershed is broadly supported locally, across Canada, and internationally. In 2006, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee recommended that Canada protect the entire South Nahanni watershed in recognition of the area's globally significant values. Scientists have also recommended that the entire watershed be protected in order to secure its ecological integrity, including adequate habitat for woodland caribou, Dall's sheep and grizzly bears....

The original study area for Nááts'ihch'oh NPR included important habitat for grizzly bears and key calving and breeding grounds for the Nahanni and Redstone herds of mountain woodland caribou. Both of these species are listed under the federal Species at Risk Act, and need large intact areas to survive. The area is also home to the northernmost populations of mountain goats in Canada, and is home to Dall's sheep which are part of the genetically unique Nahanni population that was isolated during the last ice age....

The boundary announced by [the Prime Minister] in 2012 falls far short of what is needed to protect the ecological integrity of the world-renowned South Nahanni watershed, leaving critical wildlife habitat, including caribou calving and breeding grounds, and source waters of the Nahanni River outside the park boundary. This boundary disregarded public input in the park establishment process, as well as scientific evidence of what's needed to fully protect the ecological integrity of the area and the habitat of these sensitive species. The boundary takes full advantage of potential industrial development in the area, protecting less area than any option presented during the public consultations....

Though relatively pristine, resource exploration, mine development and road access have encroached upon the headwaters of the South Nahanni River. There is a real risk that the ecological integrity of the entire watershed will be compromised if Nááts'ihch'oh NPR is not expanded to fully protect the remaining part of the watershed. Its role in completing protection of the Greater Nahanni Ecosystem, as well as its ecological and cultural significance, make it a critical area to fully protect.

As I indicated earlier, New Democrats are fully in support of the bill being sent to committee. At committee, I am sure there will be an opportunity for a very fulsome review of the bill and of the final consultation report that Parks Canada conducted, and an opportunity to hear from witnesses from the first nations and Métis peoples of the region, environmental organizations and industry on their perspectives on the particular option that was proposed.

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One thing I think many people will be looking forward to hearing about is how the ecological integrity of the park reserve will be preserved in the context of other kinds of activities that can be allowed. As well, it will be very important for the government to clarify exactly what resources will be available, both in terms of financial and human resources, in order to ensure that Parks Canada will be able to do its job in promoting and supporting the ecological integrity of the park reserve.

In conclusion, New Democrats are supporting the bill at second reading and I look forward to the discussion that will happen at committee.

• (1245)

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, as well as her commitment to pass this expeditiously. I want to ask her to clarify what “expeditiously” means. Has she dealt with her colleagues and are they ready to let this pass today?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, the process in the House is a negotiation between our two House leaders. Therefore, I would suggest that he speak to his House leader, I will speak to my House leader, and we will allow the two of them to sort that out procedurally, because that is the most appropriate place for that discussion to take place.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague for his very important, well-thought-out and eloquent speech.

The Government of Canada signed the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity with the so-called Aichi targets. It is important to meet those targets, which seek to protect at least 17% of biodiversity by 2020. Right now, only 10% of biodiversity is protected.

I sit on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, and I participated with the Conservatives and Liberals in developing the national conservation plan. I am pleased to see that this plan exists, but unfortunately it is still not being implemented. There are new parks, but we keep seeing problems. For instance, there are problems with the Sable Island national park, the Rouge national urban park and now the Nâáts’ihch’oh national park. This park will not provide the natural habitat needed to protect the wildlife that is supposed to live there. What can my colleague make of the whole situation?

[*English*]

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to refer back once again to the report from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. The commissioner specifically talked about ecological integrity and its importance. The commissioner’s report said:

Ecological integrity is a characteristic of healthy ecosystems: those that have complete food webs; a full complement of native plants and animals that can maintain their populations; and functioning ecosystem processes such as nutrient, water, and natural fire cycles that ensure the survival of those species.

It goes on to talk about the importance of this ecological integrity.

If we recognize that a functioning ecosystem is very important, what we need to do is to ensure that when we are developing parks and park reserves, we have enough of a land base to protect the whole ecosystem and that we put the resources in place to ensure that the integrity remains intact.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague gave me a good answer in saying that the boundaries of the park have really been poorly drawn.

Let me quote Alison Woodley, the national director of the parks program for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. She was present when the bill was before the Senate committee:

Unfortunately, I have to comment today that the park boundary proposed in Bill S-5 will not achieve this conservation goal because it leaves out much of the important habitat for woodland caribou, including critical calving and breeding grounds, as well as for grizzly bears and Dall’s sheep. It leaves out a significant part of the Little Nahanni River, which is a major tributary of the South Nahanni River and includes some of the most important habitat in the area.

We support the creation of new parks and we are pleased to see this new park. However, why are the Conservatives not giving more consideration to the recommendations of experts to ensure the ecological integrity and proper protection of parks? It is not true that protecting parks will harm the economy, quite the contrary. I will let my colleague answer the following question: what could be done to make the the Conservative government realize that park creation is also good for the economy?

• (1250)

[*English*]

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of pieces around this, and I also want to go back to a quote that was provided. Stephen Kakfwi, former premier of the Northwest Territories, also indicated great disappointment in the way the boundaries were drawn. He said, in part, that what happened was that local people were put in a corner because it was either the smaller protected area that they desired or no protection at all, and this was in the Manitoba Wildlands news on October 24, 2012.

That is troubling when people are given such a stark choice, a take it or leave it choice. They take the smaller area or they get nothing. I want to reference the Tsilhqot’in decision, a very important decision that just came out of British Columbia. The Supreme Court made the decision, but it was a British Columbia matter with regard to land rights. In that Supreme Court decision, one of the things the justices said was that there is a responsibility to consider use for future generations.

Once again, when we are weighing the preservation of the ecological integrity and weighing economic benefits, one of the things that absolutely must be part of the equation and part of that discussion is the impact for future generations. What will they be left with, once we are all long gone? Those are all very important considerations when the boundaries are determined for this particular area.

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**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is around the very similar topic of boundaries. I know that, with the creation of the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve, there would be a large piece of this land assembly that the people who live on those lands have requested be included in the national park reserve. With the consultation, 92% of the people had requested option one, which was the largest option that was being considered, and it seems that the boundary that has been chosen by the government is leaving out large pieces of land that are mineral rich.

There are lots of resources that would lie outside of the park's boundaries, and this would allow for new mining stakes, which are prohibited inside the park boundaries, to occur just outside. We know that mining for resources does affect the ground water tables. This national park reserve would be at the headwaters of the South Nahanni River. How would that impact the tributaries, as well as the other rivers that are feeder rivers from the South Nahanni?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to take this back to a local issue just for one moment. I live in Nanaimo—Cowichan, and I actually live in the Cowichan watershed. This summer we had a crisis in the Cowichan watershed. Our river was so low that not only was the health of our returning salmon going to be impacted but our local industry, a large pulp mill, was literally days from shutting down because it also draws water from the Cowichan River.

The reason I raise that in this context that it is an example of ending up with unintended consequences if we do not do a good job of looking at the whole watershed and looking at all the impacts on the watershed, whether they are mining, resource development, farming, or other industrial uses.

In the context of the South Nahanni, it is very important to look at the intact watershed and make decisions based on the health and well-being of that watershed.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to begin, I want to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Scarborough—Rouge River, who is doing excellent work on the Rouge national urban park. That bill will soon be before the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. I am eager to work with her on the committee because I know she is doing excellent work on that file. She has consulted organizations and stakeholders about the park. Unfortunately, the Rouge park also has some problems, which I mentioned during a speech I gave recently.

I want to focus on the fact that Canada signed the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. That is an important thing to remember because we have obligations. In 2013, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development said this:

Canada's targets under the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity are key to conserving biodiversity... Achieving them will require a concerted effort from many players, from governments to businesses to individual Canadians.

The commissioner's report stated that the government needs to do much more than it is currently doing. As I said earlier in one of my answers, the target is 17% by 2020, and we are just at 10%.

This is not just about protecting land. This is about protecting land of significant ecological value because of its biological diversity. As I said, the national conservation plan is very important, and the NDP is very proud to have worked on the plan together with the other parties. What we have to do now is implement the national conservation plan, and we have to do it fast.

Unfortunately, the bills we have seen recently do not truly address what we call ecological integrity, which, I should point out, is part of the Canada National Parks Act. It is very important to remember that we have this problem and that we also have a problem when it comes to actual implementation, be it for the Sable Island park, the Rouge park proposal, or now, the Nááts'ihch'oh park. MPs have raised concerns, but so have the experts, of course.

I would like to go back to something. Of course we are supporting the bill because we are in favour of creating parks. There were a large number of consultations, and we understand that this park is largely a proper response. For years, there were consultations and studies on this. However, we are concerned about the Conservative government's attitude toward parks. Cuts to Parks Canada in the 2012 budget resulted in the elimination of one-third of scientific positions. Clearly, it could be difficult to enforce regulations governing conservation and the development of new parks when one-third of the scientific capacity was cut with one fell swoop in 2012.

As well, we want to give Canadians the opportunity to go to national parks; however, the season has been shortened, services have been reduced in the parks, and fees have been increased. The Conservatives' approach is somewhat odd.

However, according to a report published by the Canadian Parks Council in 2011, Canadian parks support more than 64,000 full-time jobs and generate \$2.9 billion in employment income as well as \$337 million in revenue for the government.

This shows the importance of national parks and why we need to stop pitting nature against economic development. On the contrary, the environment and the development of new parks will spur economic development, as was mentioned in the report published in 2011 by the Canadian Parks Council.

I mentioned this earlier, but I will say it again: the Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainable Development said that budget cuts at Parks Canada are adversely affecting the integrity of the parks and the environment. Cuts definitely do not help.

• (1300)

This brings me to Bill S-5, the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve act. We are disappointed about some aspects of the bill, but we are happy to support it nonetheless, because at least we are adding to the number of national parks.

*Government Orders*

The bill followed consultations revealing that the public overwhelmingly supported creating a park that is bigger than the one we have now, but the Conservatives ignored that fact. They ignored public opinion and decided to protect only the smallest of the three possible zones. They failed to include some very important wildlife areas, which is really disappointing. We are afraid that the park is not big enough, especially because the vital breeding areas for caribou and some of the headwaters of the Nahanni River are not protected. Those are some of our concerns regarding the creation of this park.

I would like to share a quote from Alison Woodley, the parks program national director for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. During the Senate committee's review of Bill S-5, she said:

Unfortunately, I have to comment today that the park boundary proposed in Bill S-5 will not achieve this conservation goal because it leaves out much of the important habitat for woodland caribou, including critical calving and breeding grounds, as well as for grizzly bears and Dall's sheep. It leaves out a significant part of the Little Nahanni River, which is a major tributary of the South Nahanni River and includes some of the most important habitat in the area. Bill S-5 falls far short of being a significant conservation achievement.

Ms. Woodley specializes in parks and conservation projects.

Earlier I said that this was unfortunate, because it is a good idea and the consultation was done. Unfortunately, the result was a disappointing bill, and it will not help Canada achieve the Aichi targets in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity that we need to meet. We committed to this convention and we signed it. The Conservative government needs to be much more proactive and needs to take more significant action.

I can say that when the NDP takes power in 2015, we will be much more proactive about creating parks, and we will ensure that everything will be based on solid science. We will not cut the number of scientists by one-third. On the contrary, we will invest in science to create new parks and comply with the convention. When we create a new park, we will ensure that it will protect critical habitats and important rivers as much as possible.

• (1305)

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his good work in the House and in his riding.

[*English*]

I would like to get back to the issue of public engagement, which my hon. colleague referenced in part. We have a government that, when it can, will skirt public engagement or tilt the results in its favour in order to get what it is after. We have seen this time and time again. We are seeing it in this case too.

I wonder if my colleague would comment on this as part of a larger story of the way the government tries to not listen to the concerns and the wishes of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very relevant question.

It is the same as what is happening with the Rouge national park. The Conservative government simply wants to do what it wants. It disregards consultations and ignores the concerns that have been raised about preserving ecological integrity.

My colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River will be in committee to make sure that the Conservatives listen to reason, and I hope that they will be able to understand how important this issue is.

This bill on the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve is just as important. The public was calling for the biggest among the three proposed plans, but unfortunately what came out was the smallest plan that offered the least value in term of conservation.

[*English*]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that our government has, in fact, increased the amount of protected land in the country considerably since we have taken office. This, of course, means a gain in the protection of ecological integrity in our lands across the country.

With regard to this particular park, I was wondering if my colleague would indeed verify that it would be a net benefit in terms of the protection of land in Canada if this particular piece of legislation passed. As well, could he acknowledge that it would be in the implementation of a parks management plan that there would be further engagement in terms of both visitor experience and the development of ecological integrity plans?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize the work that my hon. colleague tried to do when she was the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of the Environment.

Unfortunately, when she was in that role in 2012, massive cuts were made to the budget of Parks Canada. This resulted in the loss of a third of the scientific staff complement, the very people who enable us to properly assess ecological integrity and create parks that will best improve wildlife conservation and respect our convention on ecological biodiversity.

This park is a good start, but it is not the park the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the general public were hoping for. Indeed, we were together at the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development when we worked on the national conservation plan. Nonetheless, we must now enforce it and we are way behind. Only 10% of land is protected, while the target is 17% by 2020, which is fast approaching.

The NDP will form the government before then, which will improve things.

[*English*]

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time I am rising in the House since the incidents of yesterday, I just want to take a moment to thank all the House of Commons security services and all our security partners who helped. I extend my deepest condolences and those of my constituents in Scarborough—Rouge River to the family of Corporal Nathan Cirillo. Our thoughts and prayers are also with Constable Son, of the House of Commons security team, who suffered a gunshot wound, in the line of duty, protecting our House of democracy.

### *Government Orders*

I will move on to Bill S-5, which would amend the Canada National Parks Act to create the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve of Canada. The Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve is in the Northwest Territories in the South Nahanni watershed. The proposed area for the park covers an area of 4,895 square kilometres, situated entirely in the Tulita district of the Sahtu settlement area. The proposed area for the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve has been long recommended for conservation by the aboriginal Sahtu people, who have been the guardians of that land for thousands of years. They have said that land use should be for conservation.

I was reading from CPAWS, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Northwest Territories Chapter, when I was doing some research to learn about the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve. The first thing that came up is the following:

Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve lies in the headwaters of the South Nahanni River watershed, upstream from and adjacent to Nahanni National Park Reserve...and World Heritage Site. These two parks, working together, are necessary to protect the globally-renowned land, water and wildlife of the South Nahanni Watershed.

Right away, when I was doing my research, the first words that came up were about the importance of conservation for the aboriginal people of the Sahtu, who have been the protectors of those lands for thousands of years. Then, from CPAWS Northwest Territories, the word that stood out for me was "protect". It is to protect the land assembly and the groundwater table and the entire watershed.

The proposed Rouge national urban park has a potential land assembly of 100 square kilometres, which includes land surrounding the Rouge river and the Duffins Creek watershed in Toronto, Markham, and Pickering. It is the ancestral home of the Mississauga, Huron-Wendat, and Seneca first nations and has sacred burial grounds and village sites.

This past weekend, I spent four hours in the Rouge visiting the sacred burial grounds, the location of a past ossuary. I spent time with an aboriginal elder, David Grey Eagle, who has been protecting these lands, working with the Friends of the Rouge Watershed and many other local people who care about Rouge Park.

We have been fighting for 100 square kilometres of park, but what the government has proposed for the study area, not even the actual final park size but the study area, is 57 square kilometres. The reason I am talking about Rouge Park is that I see the same pattern with the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve.

When the government did the consultation with the community for the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve, there were three options presented: option one was a total area of 6,450 square kilometres; option two was 5,770 square kilometres; and option three, which was the smallest of the proposals, was 4,840 square kilometres. Of the people who sent in responses and comments through the consultation process, 92.3% supported option one, which was 6,450 square kilometres; 4.6% supported option two; and 3% supported option three.

● (1310)

The government ended up making minor adjustments, and the option it is putting forward is the closest to option three. The government is supporting approximately 3% of all the people who were consulted on what they wanted for that protected land area. It

does not make any sense. The government should be supporting the comments of 92.3% of the people consulted rather than 3%.

The Nahanni National Park Reserve, which is just south of the Nááts'ihch'oh national protected reserve, would protect approximately 86% of the watershed of the South Nahanni River. Protecting 86% of the watershed would not ensure the ecological integrity of the entire watershed. It is important that 100% of the watershed be protected, not 86%.

It is also important to note that the area is rich in mineral resources. The final park boundaries put forward by the government were selected so that a maximum amount of mineral resources lie outside the boundaries. This is disconcerting, because new mining stakes are prohibited within the park boundaries. It would seem that the boundaries have been adjusted and rejigged to allow for new mining stakes to occur just outside the park boundaries. This is concerning, because through mining processes, the watershed will continue to be affected in a negative way if it is not done in a sustainable manner. I and 92.3% of the people in the area are concerned about the proposed boundaries.

It would also leave out critical wildlife areas that lie outside the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve. When I say critical wildlife areas, I mean the caribou calving and breeding grounds. Major upstream tributaries of the South Nahanni River flow downstream into the Nahanni National Park Reserve, which makes it more of a concern, because it would not be just the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve but the Nahanni National Park Reserve that would be affected, because its tributaries would potentially be affected.

I would like to quote Mr. Stephen Kakfwi, the former premier of the Northwest Territories, who said that he is "disappointed with the way the boundary lines are drawn". He said in an interview that the Prime Minister "is protecting the mining interests more than environmental interests. Unfortunately I think [the Prime Minister] has let down Canadians in his choice". He went on to say that local people were put in a corner, because it was either the smaller protected area that was put forward or it was nothing.

I am in the same position. All New Democrats have the same belief. We want more protected areas. We support the creation of a national park, but it is not fair to put the community in a corner and tell it that it will get this tiny piece of land as a national park or it will get nothing. Why can we not just do it properly? If we say we are committed to conservation and ecological integrity, then why do we not commit to conservation and ecological integrity instead of saying that we will commit to a small piece and not the whole area?

● (1315)

Another issue I want to talk about is the maintenance of parks. The *Toronto Star* reported in December 2013, after a departmental performance report by Parks Canada in November 2013, that there is approximately a \$3-billion backlog in the deferred maintenance at Parks Canada.

*Government Orders*

With new parks being created and already a \$3-billion backlog in maintenance of these parks, I am concerned for the future of Nááts'ihch'oh. I am also concerned for the future of the Rouge national urban park, which is to be created in my backyard. I want to know that when we are creating national parks, we are committing to ensuring that they are protected, conserved, that there is ecological integrity of the ecosystems and the habitat, and also that they will be maintained for future use for the generations to come.

● (1320)

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, certainly we are very supportive on this side of the House of the creation of a national park. This particular park is one that we do support.

The difficulties we have with what the Conservatives have put in place is that, again, they are not looking at their responsibilities with respect to how to best protect the wildlife. They seem to be leaning toward allowing more and more development in the area. That is of concern to many, including the Dehcho.

I listened to my colleague with respect to ecological integrity and the concern she raised with respect to staffing at the park. My colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan also spoke about the decrease in conservation and spending under the government's watch.

I would ask my colleague to elaborate because I know she had a lot to add with respect to the cuts to the parks, which has even been impacting the process for the protection of heritage lighthouses.

Could the member speak to the cutbacks to Parks Canada?

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing is absolutely correct. The commissioner of the environment identified that there is consistently a wide gap between what the government commits to and what it is actually achieving.

I did mention the departmental performance report in November 2013 and the \$3-billion backlog in deferred maintenance at Parks Canada. There has also been the elimination of jobs within Parks Canada. Budget cuts have had a huge impact, and it has led to 33% staffing cuts in science in Parks Canada. There is 60 of the 179 positions that were eliminated.

When we create new parks, existing Parks Canada staff are responsible for the creation and maintenance as well as the infrastructure, yet the government is taking 33% of the parks support to do that. It does not make any sense.

In the 2013-14 budget announcements, there was announcement of money to be spent on infrastructure and maintenance of the parks. However, I believe the timeline has been absolutely ridiculous. The budget announcement said that this year, 2014, the government would spend \$1 million; in 2015, it would spend \$4 million; and then, of course, after the next election, it would spend another \$386 million. I think it is absolutely absurd that the government is committing to spending \$386 after the next election.

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could speak to the issue she was just alluding to around the government announcing projects but not backing that up with enough resources to maintain these projects. It is not good

enough to make a ribbon-cutting announcement. These parks, this infrastructure, require ongoing maintenance.

My colleague has spoken to the arrears in maintenance and upkeep in these national parks. This seems to be part of a trend with the government, and I wonder if my colleague could speak to that.

● (1325)

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Davenport hit the nail on the head when he said that the government makes announcements, shows up for ribbon cuttings, and then does not do much to maintain whatever it is that has been opened.

I am very concerned. There is already a \$3-billion backlog in deferred maintenance at Parks Canada. There have been staffing cuts of 33% in science at Parks Canada. There has been a large budget announcement for spending, but the spending is not going to happen until after the next election. One government cannot bind the hands of a future government. It is promising money that a future government will spend which will not be a Conservative government.

The Conservatives are expecting that the \$386 million will be spent after 2015. That will be under a New Democratic government, and the Conservatives are saying that New Democrats are going to spend it. We will spend money to ensure that our parks are maintained, but why is the government not spending the money that it says it is going to spend today?

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place, especially on this day, on behalf of and representing the good people of Davenport in the great city of Toronto.

[*Translation*]

I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing.

[*English*]

Some might wonder what a guy from Toronto is doing speaking on a bill about a national park in the Northwest Territories. What I would like to talk about today is how the issues that this bill underlines should concern all of us, whether we live in big urban centres like Toronto or aboriginal communities in the north. I am talking about the issues around public engagement, ribbon-cutting policies that do not have the backing of budgets, and the promises that the Conservatives make and do not fulfill.

This park is one that we want to see created, but the proposal on the table underlines some of the deep concerns we have on this side of the aisle around how the government does its business. I would like to enumerate some of the connections and the systemic issues that this bill underlines.

*Government Orders*

Right now in this country, we have a crisis around social access and public engagement. In my city, we saw the public literally shut out of the consultation process around the reversal of the Line 9 pipeline. If the government had the full confidence that this was a fine idea, it should have allowed for a full debate and access to public consultation. As it stands now, many people in my community do not support the decision to reverse the flow of Line 9, and I present petitions in the House almost daily on that subject.

The issue is the same, when, for example, we talk about a nuclear fuel facility in my riding which operated for 50 years, and as part of its licence had an obligation to inform and engage the public about the work it had been doing. It was discovered, because no one knew about it for 50 years, that the facility had not been doing the job that its licence required of it, and the government seemed to be nonplussed by the whole affair.

We have other—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The hon. member for York Centre is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Mark Adler:** Mr. Speaker, this is not a debate about Line 9. I wish the member would give a speech that is more germane to the debate at hand and not debate frivolous items at this point. That debate is for another day.

• (1330)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** All hon. members know that there are Standing Orders related to relevance. They also know that the Chair often gives members latitude to speak about associated issues. I trust that all hon. members, including the hon. member for Davenport, will make their comments relevant to the matter that is before the House.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, as I said at the beginning of my speech, I want to underline some of the problems in this bill in terms of the process, and how the problems in this bill are indicative of the way the government chooses to operate and get around the strong current of public opinion vis-à-vis the bills it puts forward in this place.

Referencing a nuclear fuel facility in my riding is hardly not germane to the conversation because we are talking about public engagement. In this particular instance, of those who had input into issues relating to this national park, there was a 93% buy-in on one boundary configuration and the government choosing a boundary configuration that was much smaller and more amenable to mining interests. However, it was not a decision that was shared by those who provided their opinions. That is why we are making a connection. Whether it is a nuclear fuel facility, the Line 9 pipeline, northern gateway, or a national park, we need to do the hard work of engaging the public, finding the balance, and actually listening to what the public has to say.

The other issue I would like to connect between this park plan and other issues that haunt the government's approach is on deferred backlogs in infrastructure. There is a \$3-billion deferred backlog in Parks Canada. That is what it has identified. People in places like Toronto understand what this is about. There is a massive deferred backlog in the maintenance of public housing units. The government continually reneges on its responsibility to work with other levels of government to fix a national crisis in affordable housing.

Some members might ask what this has to do with a national park. I would stress that we are talking about a trend that we see with the government making flashy announcements. It has certainly made some flashy announcements with regard to housing, and there is still no affordable housing. It made a splashy announcement about a big national park in Scarborough. It made a flashy announcement about Syrian refugees. However, it does not deliver the goods. It does not provide the money or simply reneges on its promises.

The question is not so much on whether New Democrats support the creation of this park, because we do. We have concerns about the decision by the government to go with a much smaller boundary, thus diminishing the environmental protection and conservation that underpins the whole idea of a national park. There are also questions of trust. This is a government that slid in an omnibus bill, a bill that essentially chipped away at the protection of lakes, streams, and rivers. The government has an issue around social licence, around the trust of Canadians.

• (1335)

We urge the government to start to take its role more seriously vis-à-vis public engagement, transparency, listening to Canadians, and putting legislation on the table that does not play games with the facts, that does not avoid the deep desires of Canadians, especially when it comes to something as important as a national park.

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard this a couple of times now from the opposition, and I think it is important to say that it is fair for the opposition to say that other people had a different preference. However, the opposition members keep perpetuating this myth, this false representation that 90% of people wanted something different. It is important that we deliver the facts when we talk about these things in debate in the House of Commons.

There were 1,600-plus people who participated in consultations. Fewer than 65 of them indicated a preference for any one of the options. Nowhere in that figure do we ever come up with 95% or 90% of people preferring a different option from the one the government selected.

I would give it to the opposition that there may have been people with a different perspective, and we recognize that there clearly are. However, it certainly was not 90% of the people.

I would call on the opposition members to make sure that, when they level their perception in the House of Commons, they deal in facts. The facts are clear: 1,600 people provided comment and participation, and fewer than 65 of them selected a different option. That is not 90%, and any suggestion otherwise is irresponsible.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I heard a question, but I will imagine one and answer it.

How is this for a fact? There were 1,600 written comments, and of those 1,600 only 2 selected the boundary configuration that the government chose; 63 selected otherwise.

The fact of the matter is that a minuscule percentage of those who offered an opinion about the boundary selected the one the government chose, and an even smaller percentage of the overall deputies in this process chose this boundary.



*Government Orders*

It is fair to say that a park of this magnitude is widely appreciated, but what we are doing here right now is urging the government to get it right.

**Mr. Arnold Chan (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. friend from Davenport with interest, particularly with respect to his comments on consultation.

I wanted to ask the member a question about expanding on that particular point as it relates to issues around consultation with first nations, particularly with respect to the Dene.

Does the hon. member believe that consultation was appropriate in this case? It is not only the issue of consultation, but maybe I can expand that further to include whether first nation communities ultimately felt they would benefit from this particular proposal.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Mr. Speaker, in a general sense, there is approval of the park project.

However, in a more broad context, if I may just broaden it out, the government has a terrible record in terms of its process of engaging and consulting with first nations across the country on a number of projects. This is a park where we want to see comprehensive conservation, as well as engagement and involvement with all the first nation and Métis communities there.

• (1340)

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before I start my speech, I would like to do what many of my other colleagues have done, which is to acknowledge and extend our thoughts and prayers to the families and colleagues of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo, on behalf of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing. We also extend our thanks to the members of security on the Hill, especially Constable Son and Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers, for their quick action.

That brings me to the debate that is before us, which is on Bill S-5, an act to amend the Canada National Parks Act with respect to the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve of Canada.

This is a park that has been long awaited. It is adjacent to and north of the Nahanni National Park Reserve. The area for the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve has long been recommended for the conservation and land use process by the Sahtu Dene and Metis, the aboriginal people of the area.

We know that the consultation process, when it comes to first nations communities and indigenous populations, is not something the government has been good at doing. Therefore, when we are looking at this piece of preservation, such conservation would also align with the Government of Canada's commitment to conserve the greater Nahanni ecosystem, which is what it was supposed to do, and the ecological integrity of the area. The problem is that the government has chosen the smallest option, which leaves great concern about the development that would occur around that park and the impacts it would have on the wildlife.

Once the reserve was created, Parks Canada and the Sahtu Dene and Metis would be working with other land managers and resource users in the area to meet conservation objectives while respecting other land use in the area and existing third party interests, such as existing mineral claims and land leases. During the conversation we

heard concerns with respect to the preservation of the park and surrounding developments around the park.

With respect to the World Wildlife Fund's announcement on Parks Canada receiving the WWF Gift to the Earth award, Chief Frank Andrew stated:

Water is important to life and it is important to us to save our water. The South Nahanni River watershed will be well protected through Nááts'ihch'oh and that will be a very good inheritance to leave for future generations.

However, we have to give some thought to the fact that he was talking about the water situation as well as the possible impacts with respect to mining in the area. That is why they were hoping to have a much bigger piece of the pie.

I talked about consultation a while ago. There is contention surrounding the size of the park. During the consultation process on the establishment of the national park, set out in section 12(1) of the Canada National Parks Act, Parks Canada presented three options for the park's boundaries.

Option one was a total of 6,450 square kilometres to be developed to best protect conservation values while providing an open area around the existing mineral interests. We heard over and over again that option one was one of the most preferred choices. In a public consultation with 1,600 participants, 92.3% indicated a preference for option one.

Option two was a total of 5,770 square kilometres. That would diminish the achievement of the conservation goals and allow more mineral potential to be available.

Option three is the one the government decided on, which was the smallest proposal, with a total area of 4,840 square kilometres. That took advantage of the mineral potential within the proposed park reserve while providing "some" protection to key values.

• (1345)

If we look at the protection, the concern we have is with the size of the park, because it omits vital caribou breeding grounds and lacks protection for source waters for the Nahanni River. Again, we know how sacred water is, and without good drinking water or a good base for our water, it is very problematic. We know first nations consider water very sacred, as should all of us.

With little overt opposition to the size of the park from the local people, there is little political capital here, but we know it is quite important to look at that. Option one was the option we would have preferred the government choose, and so did most of the people here. However, it went with option three.

Section 16 of the Sahtu Dene and Métis land claim final agreement sets out the terms and conditions for the establishment of the national park in the Sahtu settlement area. Included in the terms and conditions are several clauses for review of the plans for the park after a period of not more than 10 years. It certainly would have been to everyone's best advantage to go with option one because it gave a lot more options for economic viability in the area, as well as for the protection of the wildlife in that area.

The NDP supports the creation of national parks in Canada's north, as well as the creation of the national parks network in Canada, including this particular park.

*Government Orders*

While we are talking about parks, we need to take into account that this is the government that has cut a lot at Parks Canada. It has had an impact, even on heritage lighthouses, and the process is going forward. I know the government has taken a lot of those resources and put them toward the Franklin expedition as well, so there has been much of a slowdown there.

The creation of the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve is the result of seven years of consultation and negotiation with the aboriginal people of the region. Again, the concern is that the government went with the smaller piece of it.

While the terms and conditions of the constitutionally protected Sahtu land claim agreement have been met, including the creation of an impact benefit plan and a management committee, we remain concerned about the government's commitment to the park. I will reiterate, because this is the biggest piece of it, that the larger park was actually the preferable option and it could be expanded in the future.

The government can create all the parks it wants, but without funding and careful protection of the ecological integrity of this and all the national parks, the designation is relatively meaningless in terms of conservation.

With that, I will leave it to questions and answers.

I thank everyone for their patience and understanding today on the situations we faced yesterday.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing for her fine speech.

Out of the three options the government had for the park, why does my colleague think it chose the third option rather than the first, which was the best?

**Mrs. Carol Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague from Nickel Belt. I know that he often works on natural resources and he knows his portfolio well. I think he will understand my answer.

When it comes to this park, the government seemed more concerned with the interests of the mining companies. An NDP government would provide enough support and the necessary resources to properly ensure the conservation of this park.

• (1350)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my constituents from Surrey North to speak to Bill S-5, an act to amend the Canada National Parks Act. I will be sharing my time with another member.

It has long been a recommendation by the Sahtu Dene and Métis that Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve be used for conservation in the land use process and I am happy to see that this recommendation is finally coming to fruition. This proposed national park reserve is located in the Northwest Territories, in the northern one-sixth of the South Nahanni River watershed in the Northwest Territories.

My NDP colleagues and I support the creation of this national park and the contributions that our national parks make toward conservation of key ecosystems and habitats in Canada. However, I am concerned that this proposed site of the park will omit certain key ecosystems and habitats. Unfortunately this proposed 4,840-square-kilometre park will not include vital caribou breeding grounds, nor will it include protection for waters for the Nahanni River.

Governing is all about choices. Every day when we arrive in the House we are forced to make choices. At committee we are forced to make choices also. It is one of the responsibilities of this job. Our constituents elect us to make these choices on their behalf. The decisions that we make in the House and at committee will not always be in the best interests of every interested party. With this bill, the Conservative government is demonstrating yet again that it values the interests of corporations more than the interests of local communities.

This is a trend that I have seen from the government. I have spoken on numerous pieces of legislation over the last three years where the same theme emerges in every single bill. The Conservatives have shown their unwillingness to consider expert opinions, expert testimony and the suggestions that the experts present. In this bill, the Conservatives are demonstrating that they value the interests of the mining industry more than the opinions of the people in the region where the park will be established.

During the consultation process for the establishment of this national park, Parks Canada presented three options for the park's boundaries. Option one included a total area of 6,450 square kilometres and was developed to best protect conservation values, while providing an open area around the existing mineral interests. This option was the overall preferred choice, being picked by 92% of those who indicated a preference. Option two was incrementally smaller with a total area of 5,770 square kilometres. Option three was the smallest proposal, with a total area of 4,840 square kilometres.

Despite the overwhelming preference for option one, which was the bigger park, the government has proceeded with option three. Despite my concerns with the size of the park, after seven years of consultation and negotiations with the aboriginal people of the region, it is at least a step forward, a small step in the right direction toward the creation of the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve. However, I wonder if the government will be able to provide the funding and support needed for this national park to meet its conservation targets. We can create all the national parks we want, but this is truly an empty gesture without the funding necessary to maintain them.

• (1355)

What is the government's track record on funding for national parks?

Unfortunately, it is not very good. It is not good at all. For example, in December 2013, the *Toronto Star* reported that there is an almost \$3 billion backlog in deferred maintenance at Parks Canada. This does not inspire confidence that our government will be able to maintain a new park in the Northwest Territories.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[Translation]*

Furthermore, the commissioner for the environment identified a “wide and persistent gap between what the government commits to do and what it is achieving”. This gives us no reason to believe that the new park reserve would be any different. In fact, the commitment the government made in its 2013-14 budget announcement regarding the spending on infrastructure in the parks is laughable. The budget announcement was \$391 million over five years to deal with crumbling roads, buildings, and dams. This comes nowhere close to covering the backlog that I mentioned, which is over \$3 billion.

On top of that, the short-term spending projections are also very ridiculous. According to the government, this year, in 2014, it will spend \$1 million. In 2015, it will spend \$4 million. What about the remainder of the money that the government has committed? Out of the \$391 million, \$386 million will come after the election. How convenient is that?

However, the current government will not continue in government in year three because this sort of accounting does not wash well with Canadians. They expect better from the government. They expect the government to deliver on the promises that were made during the election about the protection of our environment that needs to take place in this country. To sum up, the creation of national parks and national park reserves should be a priority for the Canadian government. Empty promises are not the way forward.

An NDP government, in 2015, would provide adequate support to meet conservation targets, preserve biodiversity, and help local communities realize the economic and tourism potential our national parks can provide. Based upon the current government's track record, I do not think it is committed to doing the same.

In fact, we have heard from previous speakers that the Premier of the Northwest Territories and other leaders are on record as to how the government has gone out of its way to keep very vital habitat for the caribou or the preservation of the river out of the park area. If we are thinking about preserving and enhancing the environment, we should be rejigging the boundaries in order to make national parks truly national parks rather than trying to cut corners where the effect of preserving and enhancing the environment and habitats is not taken into account.

Again, this is a very small step in the right direction. My colleagues on this side support the bill, at this point. We look forward to maybe some amendments and to listening to some of the concerns that the locals present. I hope the government will take the opportunity at committee to provide that forum so that we can look at the bill in detail.

• (1400)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The time for government orders has expired. Consequently, questions and comments for the member for Surrey North will take place after question period.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, the recent attacks on soldiers and the attack on Parliament yesterday raise many questions.

Investigations are under way, of course. However, we already know that the perpetrators were known to the authorities. Their passports had even been taken away to prevent them from fighting abroad with jihadist groups.

While our intelligence agencies and our police forces are equipped to deal with well-organized terrorist groups, they cannot deal with this kind of terrorism alone. Evil is striking our country and the western world: youths with no direction who are being brainwashed by jihadist propaganda every day. This kind of terrorism attacks the conscience of vulnerable young people.

We must therefore put in place prevention programs, with specific budgets, that address the violent radicalization of young people and make it possible to intervene when tips on those young people are received.

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*[English]***CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first let me say I am proud to see the House remains unshaken and steadfast throughout the recent attack on our institution.

This resolve, strength and perseverance is what makes our Canadian Forces who they are. Those of us who have served in the Canadian Forces deal with sudden death all the time. As a fighter pilot, I have had several dozen friends who have died suddenly. Anybody who was in combat has seen friends and comrades die suddenly. Whether it is in combat or whether it is in training, it is part of the job. It is what we expect to happen.

What we do not expect to happen is to be run down in a parking lot. What we do not expect to happen is to be shot point blank when standing on guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Those kinds of things are not part of the business, are not acceptable and should imbue us with sadness and some anger at the same point.

I want to pay tribute to people like Warrant Officer Vincent and Corporal Cirillo who paid a price that they should not have had to pay in the way that they did. I want to salute all soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen for their complete dedication to defending Canada's values that we hold so dear. I want to thank all those folks. God bless them all and God bless Canada.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**DEMOCRATIC VALUES**

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, may we be instruments of peace. Where there is hate, may we bring love. Where there is despair, may we find hope.

Today, my thoughts go out to the mothers who are suffering in silence and whose pain cannot easily be soothed.

We are fortunate to live in a country where peace and freedom reign. May we never take those privileges for granted, and may we protect them against any harm.

As members of Parliament, we are privileged to sit in a place where democracy prevails and where harmony does too—sometimes, though not always. Let us strive to be in agreement more often. We all share these values. Let us make Canada a voice for peace, compassion and solidarity.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Base Petawawa, I rise today to express sympathy for the family of Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a true Canadian hero who died in service to his country. Our military family is a tight-knit community. We feel the pain and the loss of Corporal Cirillo's family.

The day before this week's tragic event on Parliament Hill, I had the privilege of greeting the grade 5 class from Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School in Petawawa. As we stood in the Peace Tower above the Hall of Honour, a young boy of a serving soldier asked me if his dad's name was in the Book of Remembrance. Thankfully, I could tell him no.

My thoughts on Wednesday immediately went to the children of the serving soldiers of Base Petawawa, like the grade 5 class and the grade 10 civics class from Bishop Smith Catholic High School, which was on Parliament Hill the same day, and to all the children who are victims of senseless violence.

We must never forget the risk every man and woman takes when they put on the uniform of a Canadian soldier, and the loved ones at home who keep the home fires burning.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

**NATHAN CIRILLO AND PATRICE VINCENT**

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay honour to Corporal Nathan Frank Cirillo, a young reservist, and to Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, a 28-year veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces; both tragically killed in service to their country.

Nathan Cirillo was the victim of a callous act of murder yesterday while performing his duties standing guard before one of the key symbols of our fight for freedom, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

[Translation]

Patrice died just outside the facility where he provided support services to active members and veterans of our armed forces.

[English]

These deaths remind us all that living in freedom sometimes comes at a very high price, and it is the ultimate price that these two brave soldiers have paid. It engraves in our hearts our appreciation for the service of Canadian Armed Forces members.

The legacy of these two heart-wrenching deaths must be that Canada and all Canadians will not be deterred by those who seek to harm us, but will continue to vigorously defend our freedoms and our values.

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**OPERATION IMPACT**

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the dedication of over 600 Canadian Forces personnel who departed from 4 Wing Cold Lake in my riding to join our allies in Operation Impact.

The timing of this deployment could not be more significant. On Monday, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, who had served with the Canadian military for 28 years, was struck down in Montreal by a homegrown terrorist. Now, in the wake of yesterday's act of terror on Parliament Hill, we are still grappling with the gutless murder of Corporal Nathan Cirillo.

Those set on doing harm to Canada and its people should make no mistake: these senseless acts of violence will only strengthen the resolve of all Canadians.

Our servicemen and women carry the memory of their fallen comrades with them on their mission. To the families of those Canadian Forces personnel who said goodbye to their loved ones this week, we sincerely appreciate the sacrifices they make and thank them for their service to our country.

United, our country remains strong against those who threaten freedom and democracy, both at home and abroad.

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**DALAI LAMA**

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise in the House today to welcome back a friend and honorary citizen of Canada, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. In his long struggle for the Tibetan people, the Dalai Lama has consistently opposed the use of violence and teaches that all life is precious. That is an especially poignant message to Canadians today.

I stand to reaffirm Canada's support of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's unwavering commitment to non-violence and peace. I look forward to meeting him in Vancouver tomorrow with my colleagues from the Parliamentary Friends of Tibet, of which I am vice-chair.

*Statements by Members*

I call on the government to continue to urge the Chinese government to re-enter into negotiations with the Dalai Lama's envoys and consider his request to make a pilgrimage to Wutai Shan in China.

Today I join with members of the House and all Canadians in wishing a heartfelt welcome to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

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**CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the men and women of our Canadian Armed Forces. This week's tragic events provide yet again another reminder of the sacrifice and courage of our brave men and women in uniform.

As the member for Brandon—Souris, it gives me great pride to have CFB Shilo as part of our southwestern Manitoba community. Not only are we proud of the great work our service members do abroad, but we are also grateful for the work they do at home. They are mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. They are our friends and neighbours. Most of all, they are our fellow Canadians.

Today, we honour Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. We will remember them, and we will remember all of their fallen comrades who served on behalf of our grateful country of Canada.

As always, we will pull through this together, with the same resolve that has seen our country through many challenges. May God bless all of our members of the Canadian Armed Forces and continue to keep our land glorious and free.

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**CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

**Mr. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's heart and soul were attacked yesterday, but I rise today in the House to assure Canadians that both are still intact.

Parliament represents Canada's soul, heart, and democracy. Our National War Memorial represents our soul. The freedoms debated and confirmed in the House were secured by the sacrifice of tens of thousands of Canadians who died defending our values and freedoms.

Canada's deepest loss is not the innocence of our capital, but the loss of two Canadians who embodied the best of Canada. Corporal Cirillo was killed standing guard over our soul and now joins the ranks of the fallen that he was honouring. This is the same week that we lost Warrant Officer Vincent to a similarly despicable attack.

Our men and women of the Canadian Forces volunteer to serve our country, and they do so with pride. Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent were not attacked because of who they were, but because of the values that their Canadian Armed Forces uniform represents.

Canada's heart and soul remains strong despite these attacks. All of Parliament stands with the families of the fallen, and we stand firmly beside the Canadian Armed Forces.

● (1410)

**DIWALI**

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Diwali is always an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the past year, to look ahead, and to plan for the future with renewed optimism. For me personally, never has the reason for this celebration hit closer to my heart than now.

Yesterday many people in my riding of Newton—North Delta and all over the world gathered with family and friends to give thanks, to reflect, and to celebrate the victory of goodness in all of us. Ultimately, it is the goodness of the human spirit that triumphed in Ottawa. Hundreds put themselves in harm's way to protect, comfort, and help those who needed help and people they had never even met. We thank them.

Every Canadian can share in hope for the future. Around the world, our multicultural nation is a beacon of hope. We pride ourselves on our openness and we strive to build an inclusive society.

One day late, and on behalf of my NDP colleagues, I wish everyone a very happy Diwali. Happy Deepawali. *Aur naya saal mubarak.*

Next Wednesday, the member for York South—Weston will be hosting our first Diwali on the Hill.

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**EVENTS OF OCTOBER 22, 2014**

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the attack in Ottawa yesterday morning was an evil attempt to hurt and kill innocent, unsuspecting Canadians, men and women living their daily lives, working and even visiting our nation's capital.

Our first thoughts must be with our fallen heroes this week, Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, and also with those in hospital recovering from their injuries. They and their families are in our prayers, as are all our Canadian Forces members, including those in and near my riding at CFB Gagetown.

Yesterday's act of terror signified more than just an attack on innocent people. It was an attempt to strike at our democracy and instill fear and doubt in our minds. That was the outrage we all shared yesterday.

The fact that we gather here today in Parliament, determined to continue our work and not be cowed by ISIL-inspired terrorism, demonstrates that this attack failed. It is also a sign that any attempt to intimidate Canada or threaten our democratic way of life will fail.

God bless Canada. We remain strong and free.

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**EVENTS OF OCTOBER 22, 2014**

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in light of yesterday's events, I would like to express my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Corporal Nathan Cirillo for his selfless sacrifice and service to our country.

*Statements by Members*

Tragedies like this remind us that the brave men and women of our law enforcement agencies, our security services, and our Canadian Forces risk their lives every day to keep us safe. I am immensely grateful for their quick and courageous response.

We come together on Parliament Hill with different backgrounds and ideas but with the common goal to make Canada a better place. Today is no different. After yesterday's events we must continue to rely on our values and remain united as Canadians.

In solidarity, I stand to continue my service to this great nation and to work hard for my constituents in Surrey North. With love, hope, and optimism, we will persevere and we will prevail.

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•(1415)

**CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to thank the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces. I am proud to call my riding the home of 8 Wing at Canadian Forces Base Trenton.

Amid yesterday's chaos, it is important to remember the efforts of those who serve our country. Through the tragedy of yesterday's events, Canadians are coming together more strongly than ever. Party lines have been blurred as we go forward in unity to ensure a safe, democratic country.

Most importantly, our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Corporal Nathan Cirillo. Corporal Cirillo was killed as he provided a ceremonial honour guard at Canada's National War Memorial, that sacred place that pays tribute to those who gave their lives so that we can live in a free, democratic, and safe society.

It is often easy to go about our lives without much thought of those who have sacrificed their lives and of those who continue to sacrifice to defend our values. However, it is only at our most vulnerable times that we can truly come together and appreciate those brave men and women, what they have done for their country, and what they continue to do today.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PROTECTION SERVICES**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to pay tribute to the brave members of Parliament's security services, the RCMP, the Ottawa Police Service and all of the police and military services that reacted to yesterday's events with courage, discipline and strength.

[*English*]

Our first responders have always protected us, but yesterday many of us witnessed remarkable women and men doing their jobs bravely in the face of uncertainty and danger.

[*Translation*]

Our Sergeant-at-Arms, Kevin Vickers, inspired all Canadians with his leadership and courage. I would like to tell my friend Kevin how grateful we are.

[*English*]

Our Sergeant-at-Arms, Kevin Vickers, has a long and distinguished career in public safety and public service. Yesterday my fellow New Brunswicker inspired Canadians by his courage and his discipline, and we are all forever grateful to him and the women and men who work with him for our safety in this place.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with emotion and gratitude that I speak today to recognize the strength, courage and unwavering commitment of all the men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces.

These individuals are dedicated to protecting the welfare and safety of our country, and they serve with honour around the clock. No obstacle or threat prevents them from responding to the call. Faith in and love for our country, Canada, abides in them and guides them always.

In my part of the country, we are fortunate to always be able to count on the Valcartier military base, whose soldiers protect and defend us.

More than ever, we realize that by being united, by working together, we as a society are able to enjoy the freedom and democracy to which we are entitled.

Once again, I would like to thank the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces and all the military bases across the country.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**NATHAN CIRILLO**

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to salute Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a constituent in my riding and a member of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, a storied regiment of the reserve forces based in Hamilton. This soldier was an example of the finest of men and women who stand between Canadians and those who would seek to destroy our way of life.

A single father of a young son, Corporal Cirillo earned the honour of standing on ceremonial guard at our National War Memorial. On such duty, soldiers are not issued live ammunition. Our service personnel are prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, but who would have believed that on what probably was the proudest day of this man's life, he would lose it. Corporal Cirillo was murdered in the most cowardly fashion.

Today, as members of the House resume our duties on behalf of Canadians, I know all in this esteemed House will join me in offering our sincerest condolences to this family.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

*Oral Questions*

●(1420)

**PROTECTION SERVICES**

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday's tragic events show unequivocally the bravery, organization, and commitment of the House of Commons and Senate security staff, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Ottawa Police Service. Without hesitation, they put themselves in harm's way to protect all of us here: members of Parliament, senators, our staff, and the support staff and visitors who find themselves here on Parliament Hill. Yesterday we knew they were there.

Our calm was a measure of the confidence we have in the men and women who greet us here every morning, every day. They demonstrated professionalism, efficiency, and courage. This is Canada's House, and they are the keepers of Canada's House. The brave men and women of our police and security first responder units are people we need to personally thank. Across this broad nation, every Canadian thanks them.

As the sun rose on our flag today, they were there. We know that as the sun sets, they are still vigilant, prepared, and courageously standing on guard for thee.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[English]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today we are here. Today we carry on.

Can the Prime Minister please update Canadians and the members of this House on the horrific events of yesterday? Can he tell us what immediate measures are being taken to ensure the security not only of Parliament but of all Canadians?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while obviously I am briefed on a regular basis, I will leave public comment on certain events to the police authorities as they conduct their investigations.

Obviously, we have been, as I indicated earlier today in the House, looking at our various laws and options under the law to strengthen the ability to survey, detain, and arrest individuals who are threats to us.

At the same time, I know individual security agencies will also be looking very carefully at the events of yesterday to determine what else has to be done. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the security agencies of Parliament themselves do not report to the government; they report to the Speakers and to the Boards of Internal Economy of the two Houses. I know that the RCMP, City of Ottawa police, and others will be working with them.

[Translation]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while I thank the Prime Minister, we know that the information that is out there about yesterday's tragic events is incomplete and sometimes even contradictory.

Now that the situation is under control, does the Prime Minister intend to hold a public information session so that everyone can find out about everything that happened?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the police are going to give more information about what happened a little later today. Since investigations are obviously under way, I think it is up to the police to inform the public. I expect that information to be forthcoming in the near future.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it would appear that the assailants involved in Monday's and yesterday's attacks had their passports revoked before they committed their crimes. Many other Canadians, like them, have had their passports revoked because the authorities believed that they intended to join radical groups in other countries.

What new measures, if any, have been taken in these particular cases?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the police and the RCMP have indicated that the passport of the first individual in Quebec had been revoked. That has not been confirmed in the second case. I will let the RCMP inform the public about these matters.

Clearly, we are looking at that aspect of the situation. We are very concerned that there are Canadians here who want to train to commit terrorist acts throughout the world.

●(1425)

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today we see enhanced security measures on Parliament Hill, as we should. Still today, this remains first and foremost a mainly open area, and that is good for democracy.

As the government adopts new, permanent security measures in the coming days, can the Prime Minister assure Canadians that their Parliament, the pillar of our democracy, will remain open to them?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in every situation in our history, the governments have made sure of two things: that our country and its citizens are safe and secure and that we have a free and open country. Our departments and security agencies will continue to act with this objective in mind.

[English]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we stand here today united, united in our determination to keep this land strong and free. We are all committed to that goal.

We also know that, from time to time, we will disagree on how to achieve that goal. Will the Prime Minister join me in committing that, no matter what differences we may have in the days or weeks to come, we will all approach this complex issue with the respect and dignity it deserves, knowing that however we sometimes disagree, every member of this House is committed to the safety and security of all Canadians?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to see all members of Parliament in all parties unite around the idea that, whatever our differences, we are committed not only to the safety and security of Canadians but to the free and democratic society we all hold so dear.

I think it is important to remind Canadians at times like this, in spite of the fact that we are considered and are in fact a relatively young country, that from the great pact of 1867 we have one of the longest unbroken forms of governance, particularly democratic governance, anywhere in the world today. It has been unbroken by war, unbroken by civil disorder or national catastrophe for almost 150 years now. It is a tremendous country that we are all fortunate to be part of, and I know we are all committed to making it better.

[Translation]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, being able to ask questions is essential in a democracy, even in difficult situations—especially in difficult situations.

[English]

Two weeks ago, RCMP Commissioner Paulson straight out told Parliament that there were 90 individuals on a national security watch list. How many are there now?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would not expect that the number has changed radically in the past two weeks. Obviously, that kind of information is really in the purview of security agencies to provide in detail, if they think that is appropriate.

The fact of the matter is that there are serious security threats in this country, and in many cases those serious security threats continue to be at large and not subject to detention or arrest. I know that is something that concerns Canadians at large. It concerns the government, and we are working with our security agencies to examine how we can handle that situation.

[Translation]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some media outlets are reporting that the passport of one of the assailants had been revoked, while the passport application of the other assailant had been rejected. It appears that both of these men wanted to leave Canada to join extremist groups, which has been a criminal offence since 2013.

What steps are being taken to ensure that others in similar circumstances will be stopped?

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, to add another fact about the RCMP, the police have indicated that the first terrorist who struck in Quebec earlier this week was being actively investigated. The reality is that there are some Canadians who want to become foreign fighters. Some already are, and others are seeking to become foreign fighters. This is a major concern for our security agencies. These agencies and the police are working closely to deal with that threat.

[English]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, news reports indicate that one of this week's attackers had his passport revoked, while the other's passport application was denied.

Both appear to have attempted to leave Canada to join extremist organizations. Since 2013, that is an indictable crime. What is, therefore, now being done to arrest others in the same situation?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, to repeat my answer, I am not in a position to confirm all of the statements just made by the leader of the Liberal Party. I know the police will comment on those in the days to come, but the police have said, in the case of the first terrorist, that the individual was subject to an active investigation and that his passport had been seized, in fact revoked. The reality is that our police and national security agencies are aware of such individuals seeking to become foreign fighters. There are already such Canadians elsewhere in the country. These agencies are doing everything within the law to resist and to deal with that kind of threat. It is our judgement that they may need additional tools, and we are examining that matter.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada can count on the competent and committed employees of the public service. That has been proven once again in the past few hours.

Today, as usual, despite the terrible events of yesterday, they are at their desks across the country. They are courageous and they are committed to ensuring that the government keeps working smoothly. That is how they are responding to intimidation and violence.

Can the President of the Treasury Board explain what is being done to ensure their safety?

[English]

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a very trying day for many public servants, who, in the face of a situation that none of us had ever contemplated, still worked on the public's behalf and on parliamentarians' behalf.

We have been in constant communication with the public service to keep them up to date on the situation as it arose yesterday and as it will arise in the future. We will continue to do that.

I believe that every public servant should expect that he or she has the ability and the right to work in an environment that is secure and free and free of potential violence.

[Translation]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are concerned about yesterday's tragic events and the attack in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu earlier this week.

As Canadians return to their daily routines, can the Minister of Public Safety tell us what is being done to ensure the safety of our constituents?

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



*Oral Questions*

Our government introduced anti-terrorism legislation that is built on four pillars: prevent, detect, deny and respond to terrorist threats.

That is why the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has implemented a robust program to counter extremism. We will continue to work on ensuring that security agencies can protect Canadians.

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we all agree that ensuring public safety is the primary responsibility of this House.

We also have a responsibility to protect fundamental freedoms. Achieving a balance between safety and freedom will be our main challenge in the coming months.

How does the government plan to achieve this balance?

• (1435)

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we live under the rule of law. It is therefore important for the measures we put in place to be consistent with Canadian law.

That is why the national security agencies and the law enforcement agencies work within the legal framework. It is important for us, as parliamentarians, to clarify the parameters.

That is why we intend to clarify what tools are available to help the RCMP and the police forces allow us to do our jobs and Canadians to go about their daily lives.

[English]

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as we begin trying to comprehend the events of this week, it has become clear that members of the Canadian Forces may have been specifically targeted for attack.

Like many MPs, I have a base in my riding, which is obviously at the heart of our community. Can the government assure the House that steps are being taken at bases across the country to ensure security for Canadian Forces members and civilian staff?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to take the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of our men and women in uniform and the bases.

The Chief of Defence Staff is actively looking into this and taking steps, but make no mistake, we will remain vigilant against those at home and abroad who wish to harm us.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we all recognize the need to ensure public safety, and we all understand that public safety is a primary responsibility of this House, but we are also responsible in this House for protecting our fundamental freedoms. These will both present continuing challenges in the coming weeks and months.

How does the government plan to ensure that both public safety and our fundamental freedoms are protected moving forward from the events of the past few days?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are a state of law. We make sure that all our enforcement agencies and national security agencies work within the scope of the law.

That is why we, as politicians and parliamentarians, have the duty to provide clarity so that they can work in these departments to keep Canadians safe. That is why this government intends to table legislation to clarify those powers so that we can sleep safely at night.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the latest reports on the ravages of the Ebola epidemic are alarming.

According to the WHO, the Ebola virus has killed 5,000 and infected 9,000 since the epidemic broke out in March. The WHO estimates that there could be up to 10,000 new cases a week by December. This is a major tragedy affecting Africa and the entire international community.

Can the government tell the House about what our country is doing to address this epidemic?

[English]

**Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that transcends politics and partisanship.

Canada is at the forefront in responding to the Ebola outbreak. We are contributing \$65 million to leading international humanitarian organizations, like the World Health Organization, the United Nations, and Médecins Sans Frontières. We are also contributing 1,000 doses of leading-edge vaccine. We are contributing millions of pieces of personal protective equipment: 1.2 million gowns, 1.5 million gloves, and two million face shields. Canada is showing international leadership on the Ebola file.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the death toll from Ebola is rising daily, the International Red Cross has said that the virus can be stopped within four months if the world is prepared to take all the necessary steps. This is a global crisis, and it requires a global response.

Can the minister update the House on what additional contribution the Canadian government is prepared to make to the international response?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since April, Canada has been at the forefront of the international effort to battle this terrible disease. We have been working with the World Health Organization, Doctors Without Borders, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

As of yesterday afternoon, all the organizations receiving Canadian aid money received their contribution agreements. The funds will be released as soon as the organizations sign these agreements and indicate so to the government.

*Oral Questions*

•(1440)

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are also very concerned about the chikungunya virus, which is affecting hundreds of thousands of people in the Caribbean. The outbreak has led Jamaica to declare a state of emergency. At least 200 Canadians have already contracted the virus, and many more risk being infected in their travels this winter.

Can the minister inform the House of what steps the Public Health Agency is taking to protect Canadians from this virus?

**Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Public Health Agency of Canada is actively monitoring the situation and is taking all necessary precautions.

[Translation]

**Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, borders cannot contain diseases and viruses. Canadians need the right information to protect themselves from the infectious virus chikungunya. People travelling in the south and the Caribbean are at greater risk. So far, 200 Canadians have been infected.

Can the minister tell Canadians what measures the government is taking to protect those Canadians who are most at risk?

[English]

**Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I just indicated, the Public Health Agency of Canada is actively monitoring the situation.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to the Prime Minister, this week, CSIS's deputy operations director told Parliament that due to limited resources, the agency was unable to provide blanket coverage of the 90 individuals in Canada viewed as potential threats.

Can the Prime Minister update the House on additional resources being immediately allocated to track these suspects?

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government did not wait for the terrorist attacks to adjust budgetary resources.

Since 2006, we have increased the budget for our Canadian security intelligence agencies by one-third of their capacity and we are doing the same for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We are increasing the budgets, we are providing tools and we are ensuring that we can track down terrorists. We will continue to do so with tenacity and great vigour.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just this week, the CSIS deputy director of operations told parliamentarians that they were having difficulty keeping the 90 individuals fully under surveillance with the limited resources they currently have.

Can the Prime Minister give us an update on the additional resources being provided to find those suspects?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the resources of Canadian security intelligence agencies have increased by 33%. We hope to have the support of the opposition when we ask for their powers to be clarified so that they not only have the budgetary resources, but also the legal authority they need to protect Canadians.

[English]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about existing tools then. In 2013, this House renewed preventative detention as a tool for law enforcement in these cases. In recent weeks, have any preventative detentions taken place?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me be crystal clear. This government is increasing the budgetary resources both for law enforcement agencies and national security agencies. We are moving forward with more tools so that they can protect Canadians, keep us safe, keep this very place safe, and keep every Canadian safe. We will move forward and seek support from the opposition, which unfortunately, we have not always had in the past.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, together, Canadians are celebrating the courage of Malala Yousafzai, as well as her hope for a world in which all girls have access to education.

Unfortunately, yesterday's ceremony to grant her Canadian citizenship was cancelled as a result of yesterday's tragic incidents.

Can the government tell us when this event will be rescheduled, so that Canadians can pay tribute to her courage? In addition, will Canada provide funding for the Global Partnership for Education, which does so much for girls' education?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is fully committed to improving access to basic education for children in need.

The replenishment pledging conference recently held by the Global Partnership for Education certainly started a discussion in which Canada is fully participating.

We will continue to determine, with our national and international partners, how we can make a real difference in education.

•(1445)

[English]

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, all Canadians applaud Malala Yousafzai's courage and her vision for a world where girls have equal access to education. We cannot let her stand alone.

It has been four months since the Global Partnership for Education pledging conference the minister just referred to took place. The question is this: Will Canada renew its funding for this important initiative to stand with Malala and so many girls like her?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, Canada is deeply committed to increasing access to quality basic education for all children in need and youth.

The Global Partnership for Education's last pledging conference launched a very interesting discussion and crucial conversation in which Canada is a very active partner. We will continue to work with Canadian and international organizations to determine how to achieve the best results for the people in need.

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#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the final arguments in the first nations child welfare case continued today at the Human Rights Tribunal. First nations children receive 22% less funding from child welfare services than what other children in Canada receive. What steps are being taken by the government to ensure that we are not discriminating against children living on reserve and that we are funding child welfare services to the same standards as all other services in this country?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, among the measures taken has been an increase of 40% since 2006. We now invest close to \$630 million in child and family services on reserve, but more important than that, what this government has done is introduce a prevention-based approach to delivering child and family services on reserve. This is an initiative that is taking place as we speak and that will continue in the future.

[Translation]

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about children like the four-year-old girl with a heart condition who needed a raised hospital bed so that fluid did not accumulate in her lungs.

If she had lived anywhere other than on a reserve, she would have had that bed in a few days, but she is aboriginal. As a result, she waited nearly seven months.

How does the minister plan to ensure that children living on reserves receive the health care that they are entitled to and they need?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member stated, children living on reserves are entitled to the same health care as Canadians who do not live on reserves.

I do not have the details of the specific case he mentioned. However, we have applied a principle that was adopted in the House. Jordan's principle guarantees that there is no dispute between the federal and provincial governments when it comes to the care to be given to a child in need.

#### Oral Questions

We know that health care comes under provincial jurisdiction. However, we have this principle that enables us to avoid situations like the one he mentioned.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament from Hamilton, I want to express my thanks to all of my colleagues for their kind words and condolences to Nathan Cirillo's family and loved ones, to everyone who placed flowers at the James Street Armoury in Hamilton, and to those who continue to sign the book of condolences in the Hamilton city hall.

Yesterday the most sacred place to pay honour to those who have fallen in the service of Canada was attacked. Would the Minister of Veterans Affairs please give us his reflections on the events of yesterday?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a very short distance from this very place. Corporal Nathan Cirillo stood with the strength and determination of his regiment on guard for our most sacred place of remembrance. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier will now and forevermore be guarded under the watchful eyes of Corporal Nathan Cirillo who remains at his post.

On behalf of a grateful Parliament and indeed a grateful nation, we say our thanks to Corporal Cirillo, lest we forget.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

[Translation]

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it has now been one year since the Competition Tribunal found that credit card fees Canadian businesses have to pay are excessive and that more coercive regulation is needed.

Could the minister tell us when he intends to announce a code of conduct for the credit card companies and explain to us how this will help reduce costs to Canadian small and medium-sized businesses?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard the concerns of small businesses and introduced a code of conduct. The code has been well received by consumers and industry groups, particularly small businesses. We are constantly monitoring compliance, and we are working with small businesses and consumers to ensure that they are both being heard.

[English]

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance knows, Canada's small businesses struggle to pay excessively high merchant fees to credit card companies. I understand that, in an effort to reduce these fees, the government intends to announce additions to its voluntary code of conduct for credit card companies.

### Oral Questions

Could the minister explain to this House why the government has chosen to institute a voluntary rather than a mandatory code?

**Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are working with credit card companies on a volunteer basis to address issues related to the interchange fee; but in respect to the code of conduct we believe that can work. There is an enforcement mechanism that is voluntary, but everyone is partaking in it, and we believe consumers are well protected by it.

\* \* \*

### CANADA POST

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the decision to eliminate home delivery will make Canada the only country in the G7 without door-to-door mail service, and it will make things especially hard for people of limited mobility.

To make matters worse, Canada Post has cancelled a contract with a Canadian company and chosen to buy the new super mailboxes from the United States.

Could the minister explain why Canadian companies were not even involved or invited to bid on this contract?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, Canada Post is an arm's-length organization with a very specific mandate to ensure that it is self-sustainable. That being said, it has a five-point plan to ensure that it is self-sustainable going into the future, and that includes converting the last one-third of households, which currently receive mail door to door, to community mailboxes. It is proceeding with this plan, and with its plan too it will ensure it returns to self-sustainability, as is required under its act.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify that 60% of Canadians currently receive their mail at home and that the decision to eliminate home mail delivery will affect five million homes. Naturally, seniors and people with reduced mobility will be among the hardest hit, but this decision will also affect businesses in my riding, including businesses in Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, and employees who do not have access to the contract to manufacture new community mailboxes.

Can the minister explain why American companies are building the new community mailboxes?

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated in the House before, Canada Post is an arm's-length corporation. It has its own board of directors; it has its own management. They are there to make decisions in the best interests of Canada Post. We do not intervene in the day-to-day operations or decisions of Canada Post. However, it has to remain self-sustainable and that is exactly why it is implementing its five-point plan right now.

\* \* \*

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday's events were tragic and troubling, but hard questions must be asked, and answers expected. Two weeks ago before committee, the

minister revealed there are 80 individuals known to have returned to Canada from being involved in terrorist activities abroad. Why have they not been charged under section 83.181 of the Criminal Code, brought in under the Combating Terrorism Act?

• (1455)

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. As a solicitor general, I am sure that, like me, he has full confidence in our Canadian law enforcement and national security agency to enforce the law. Our job here is to provide them with the tools. I hope I can count on his support and the support of his party to table legislation here that will keep us safe here in Canada.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the minister that there is existing law there now. However, he has mentioned several times today about new laws being brought in. If that is the case, will the minister or the government assure us that they will be open to including an all-parliamentary oversight committee, similar to the system that is set up by our allies abroad, in any new anti-terror legislation to do two things: one, to ensure that all possible security measures are taken; and two, to ensure that there is balance between security and rights?

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague seems to want to have his cake and eat it too.

As my colleagues know, we have a four-pillar approach to fighting terrorism. It is important to reach out to communities and invest in prevention. That is what our agencies are doing. However, when individuals break the law and the Criminal Code, they will be charged. What we need to do is give our law enforcement agencies the tools they need to turn charges into sentences.

\* \* \*

[English]

### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Ontario Ombudsman André Marin released a report that found children are at risk in unlicensed daycares. He says:

The stakes in the child care system are high. Mistakes put the lives and welfare of young children at risk.

Unfortunately, across Canada, only 20% of children have access to regulated child care.

Could the government inform the House how many of the promised 125,000 child care spaces were created?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the universal choice child care benefit has assisted literally millions of Canadian families to make choices that are most relevant to them and their family circumstances, where they live, in providing for child care. This government believes that moms and dads are the real experts in child care. Whether they work in shifts, or they live in rural areas, or they have relatives helping to take care of kids, all of them deserve support, not just those who depend on nine-to-five institutional care.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, research shows that investing in child care is beneficial not only for children and their parents but to society and the economy as a whole. However, according to the OECD and the UN, Canada ranks last in spending for early childhood education among comparable countries. Will the minister inform the House what steps the government is taking to invest in early childhood education and child care, so parents have more choice?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what our strategy is about, focused on choice for parents as opposed to the one-size-fits-all institutional approach of the NDP. I should also mention that, since our government has taken office, there are 225,000 fewer Canadian children living in poverty, below the low-income cutoff line. Also, the member speaks about resources in the province of Ontario, a province to which we have increased the Canada social transfer by \$4.6 billion, or over 60%. Since 2006, we are giving Ontario and the other provinces historic levels of resources to address child care. We expect them to use those resources wisely.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of National Defence please update the House on the status of Operation Impact, Canada's contribution to the fight against the terrorist forces of ISIL in the Middle East?

• (1500)

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that Operation Impact is on schedule and going ahead as planned. Today, 6 CF-18 fighter jets and 1 Polaris refuelling aircraft departed from CFB Bagotville, and a further 120 Canadian Armed Forces members departed from CFB Trenton, and they will be based in Kuwait.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness recently made reference to the 90 individuals who pose a potential threat to Canada's security.

Taking that into consideration, have preventative detention measures—as permitted under the Anti-terrorism Act and renewed by the House in Bill S-7—been taken in recent weeks?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, thanks to our government, we have equipped law enforcement agencies with important tools so that they can track terrorists and eventually lay charges and put them behind bars.

Now, we need to continue equipping them with the necessary tools to clarify the law, and that is what we will do.

\* \* \*

**RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, VIA Rail is trying to put an end to its passenger rail service in eastern Quebec and New Brunswick. They have temporarily added extra departures for the holidays, but they did not publicize it.

Toying with passenger rail schedules will not help them win back the client base they have lost over the past two years.

Will the minister intervene so that VIA Rail will stop trying to cut rail service in Quebec and the Maritimes?

*[English]*

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, VIA Rail is an independent crown corporation that makes its own decisions with respect to operational matters. That being said, I can tell the House that it, too, has a mandate as well. Its mandate is to make sure that it meets the needs of today's travellers and that it does so without being too much of a drain on taxpayer dollars, because it is funded by the taxpayer.

With those two pieces of information, VIA Rail sets its schedule, sets its operations, and indeed determines on what frequency there is going to be travel in that certain part of the country.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are very concerned about the humanitarian situation as it develops in Iraq. All Canadians are deeply troubled by the barbaric actions of ISIL, and especially the humanitarian tragedy its actions are creating.

ISIL is a source of concern for all Canadians. Can the minister update the House on the tragic situation in Iraq and the assistance Canada provides?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is the fifth-largest donor in terms of humanitarian aid in Iraq. Just last week, Canada launched with UNICEF the “no lost generation” initiative in Iraq. This initiative will assist up to 200,000 children in Iraq and help them access education opportunities.

This is concrete action that reaches out to people who need it and who are most vulnerable: youth.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

Canada is the fifth-largest contributor in Iraq, and that is something Canadians can be proud of.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PARLIAMENT OF CANADA**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after what we have all experienced in the past 24 hours, I believe we have made Canadians proud today.

I think we should thank everyone here for both the questions and the answers. Today, we asked about public safety, child care, small businesses, first nations, and cuts to Canada Post. Would the government House leader not agree that this was an excellent example of the House of Commons at its best?

Did we not just show the world that Canadian democracy stands tall and that it proudly continues?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of how our House has conducted itself today, but I am very proud of that every day. We live in the best country in the world. We have the best democracy in the world. We can all be proud of that, and I hope that will continue for many, many years to come.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MARINE TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a march is planned for next Sunday in Sorel-Tracy to protest the presence of supertankers on the St. Lawrence between Quebec City and Montreal. The St. Lawrence is becoming an oil shipping superhighway, and the federal government refuses to improve standards for dealing with a massive spill.

This is despite the fact that the Lake Saint-Pierre part of the river is a world biosphere reserve. The Council of Canadians has even lodged a complaint against Canada with UNESCO.

Why is the minister ignoring the repeated demands of the municipalities located along the St. Lawrence, which are worried about the lack of an adequate response plan?

● (1505)

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is very well aware of the fact that as we continue to sign free trade agreements around the world, we will have increased traffic in our waters. That is why we embarked upon, over a year ago, a world-class tanker safety panel to provide us with the state of play in terms of how we were in the country right now in preparedness, and second, what we could do to make it better.

We are in good condition here in this country. We do have recommendations. We have taken steps to make it better. For example, I announced funding a week and a half ago for Ocean Networks Canada, which will put in place a system of networks and a system of sensors to make Canada the smartest coastline

monitoring country in the entire world. It is these kinds of steps and investments that do make a difference.

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**PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT**

**The Speaker:** Before moving on to the Thursday question, I would like to provide a brief update to reassure all parliamentarians and everyone in our parliamentary community.

Yesterday, I had regular meetings with the Sergeant-at-Arms and the director general of security services to receive reports as the situation unfolded. Today, I have asked for thorough reports, which I will share with the Board of Internal Economy, on measures to ensure the continued safety of the parliamentary precinct.

[Translation]

This morning I met with the party whips to give them all the information, which they will share with their members. I will contact independent members directly to keep them up to date as well.

[English]

I have also taken additional steps to ensure the integrity of the ongoing investigation into yesterday's events. Parliament is closed to visitors today and tours have been cancelled. However, I have stressed that these must be temporary measures. Parliament must remain an institution that is both open and secure.

Access to the grounds of Parliament Hill will be controlled and I do ask that all employees ensure that their IDs are visible at all times. I have also asked for a review of screening protocols and will report the results to the board as well.

[Translation]

I also asked my staff to ensure that the employee assistance program is available to anyone who needs a little more support in dealing with yesterday's terrible ordeal.

[English]

Finally, I will be ordering a comprehensive review of all actions that were taken yesterday, examining our security systems and procedures, identifying what worked, and making improvements where necessary.

Members will ask, indeed Canadians will ask, how this came to occur and what specifically will be done to prevent future occurrences? These are legitimate questions and they require comprehensive answers. I resolve to work with the leadership of all parties and indeed all members to ensure that the House obtains answers to these vital and important questions.

I would like to briefly echo the sentiments that were expressed this morning, specifically thanking the brave men and women of our House of Commons security forces, the RCMP, and the Ottawa Police.

Our thoughts are also with Constable Son, who suffered a gunshot wound to the leg. Thankfully, I can report that he is in stable condition and expected to make a full recovery.

I would like to thank our own Kevin Vickers. On behalf of all members, I add my voice of thanks for his bravery and courage.

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, each and every week it is a real privilege to rise in my place here in the Chamber of the House of Commons to request of the government what will fill our agenda for the subsequent week.

I must say that it is also a very real privilege to do so each and every week with absolute freedom from fear over the safety and security of this place.

[Translation]

This place is the cornerstone of Canada's democratic institutions. Preserving its openness and transparency, as well as its safety, is of incalculable importance to our democracy. Accordingly, I will echo the gratitude that has been pouring in for the brave men and women who ensure the safety and security of Canada's Parliamentary precinct. Our Sergeant-at-Arms, Kevin Vickers, more than deserves all the thanks and praise that he and his team of security services have received.

• (1510)

[English]

I would like to highlight, Mr. Speaker, that the thoughts of the House, of course, as you just mentioned, are with Constable Samearn Son, who sustained a gunshot wound to the leg during the commissioning of his duties to bring yesterday's attack to an end. I was glad to see in Mr. Vickers' statement today that he is in stable condition and expected to make a full recovery.

[Translation]

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and your team, the team of clerks and the procedural staff for doing everything in their power to ensure that we could get back to work this morning on schedule.

[English]

With that, and perhaps with a more profound sense of the privilege to do so today, on behalf of all members of Parliament, and indeed all Canadians, I would like to ask my honourable colleague, the government House leader, what to expect on the agenda of the nation's legislature for the remainder of this week and the next.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first, let me take the opportunity to extend my own appreciation and thanks to our Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers, the House of Commons Security Services, and their security and law enforcement partners for their extraordinary work yesterday.

Much has been said, all of it deserved, and I cannot think that anybody here thinks we can say it too much. All members of the House, and the institution itself, were incredibly well-served by them yesterday. We have every right to be proud of them.

[Translation]

All members of the House, and the institution itself, were incredibly well served by them yesterday. We have every right to be proud of them.

I also want to acknowledge yesterday's efforts of your other officials, and the indulgence of my counterparts and their staff, as we

### Government Orders

managed our way through the logistics surrounding the next meetings of this House.

[English]

Plans do change from time to time. However, here is the plan as I have it for the next week.

Today, we will continue debating the bills I have indicated on our projected order of business, first, Bill C-35, justice for animals in service act (Quanto's Law), at second reading. It is kind of appropriate since we were among many of those very police dogs, and other service animals yesterday, taking care of us. Perhaps it would be a good tribute to them to see this bill advance.

We have Bill S-5, Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve act, which we will continue debating, as well as Bill S-2, incorporation by reference in regulations act, at second reading.

Tomorrow we will start report stage of Bill C-41, Canada-Korea economic growth and prosperity act. If there is unanimous support, perhaps we can also take up third reading tomorrow as well.

In any event, on Monday and Tuesday of next week, we will continue with any uncompleted debates on today's and tomorrow's bills, as well as Bill C-21, red tape reduction act, at second reading.

Starting on Wednesday and for the remainder of next week, we will debate the economic action plan 2014 act, No. 2, which my hon. friend, the Minister of Finance introduced this morning.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

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

The House resumed from June 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-35, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak to Bill C-35, known as Quanto's law.

I realize that the primary focus of the bill is on law enforcement animals and this is entirely appropriate, given the heightened risk that these animals face in the course of assisting the police and other law enforcement officers in dealing with the criminal element. Certainly, they deserve our respect and the greatest protection that the legislation promises.

It is important that we not overlook the fact that the legislation would also provide a greater measure of protection to service animals. Service animals are animals that have been trained for tasks that assist people with disabilities. Service animals are not considered pets. Most service animals are dogs, and most of us are familiar with the role that guide dogs play in helping men and women who are blind, have low vision or who want greater mobility to achieve independence and freedom.

*Government Orders*

Socialization and training of service dogs starts at a very young age. Foster parents teach the puppies basic obedience, house manners and socialization to different environments. This helps the puppies become well-adjusted with different situations, experiences and people. These are skills that the dogs would benefit from when they are later assigned to provide future assistance to their owner with a disability.

Although assistance dogs have traditionally helped people with disabilities, such as blindness or, more recently, deafness or mobility disabilities, there is a wide range of other disabilities that an assistance dog may help with, as well, including psychiatric disabilities. A psychiatric service dog is a specific type of service dog trained to assist its handler with psychiatric disabilities, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and schizophrenia.

Like all assistance dogs, a psychiatric service dog is individually trained to do work or perform tasks that mitigate the handler's disability. Training to mitigate a psychiatric disability may include: providing environmental assessments, in cases such as paranoia and hallucinations; signalling behaviours, such as interrupting repetitive or injurious behaviours; reminding the handler to take medication; retrieving objects; guiding the handler from stressful situations; or acting as a brace if the handler becomes dizzy.

I note that the bill's proposed definition of service animal requires the animal be certified, in writing, as having been trained by a professional service animal institution to assist a person with a disability. In this respect, the bill is consistent with Part VII of the Canadian air transportation regulations.

Responding to concerns about how to make air travel as accessible as possible for passengers with disabilities, while at the same time respecting necessary measures to protect the collective safety of all passengers and crews, Part VII of the Canadian air transportation regulations requires airlines engaging in domestic airline operations, using an airplane with 30 or more passenger seats, to permit service animals used by individuals with a disability to accompany the person on a flight. The animal must be properly harnessed in accordance with standards established by a professional service animal institution.

However, the air transportation regulations require that the service animal be certified, in writing, by a professional service animal institution as having been trained to assist a person.

The bill has taken a similar approach in requiring the certification of the service animal. For example, the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind issues an identification card, certifying that both the dog and the passenger, with the disability, have each completed the training provided by the organization.

• (1515)

Most service animal institutions provide an ID card, but some may provide a certificate, a licence, or identification papers, confirming that the service animal has completed the required training.

Air Canada allows certified, professionally trained service animals that are assisting customers with disabilities to be carried free of charge in the passenger cabin, at the customer's feet. The animal must be harnessed, and certified as having been trained to assist a person with a disability by a professional service animal institution.

Air Transat's policy is similar. When accompanied by certification and documentation and travelling with a person with a disability, certified service dogs are welcome in the passenger cabin of its aircraft.

This requirement for certification is entirely appropriate.

Certification entails training at an approved training facility in accordance with set standards. For example, in British Columbia, to receive a guide animal certificate, dogs are the only type of animal that can be certified. The guide/service dog must be trained by a training facility that has been approved by the B.C. minister of justice. This includes all dogs accredited by Assistance Dogs International or the International Guide Dog Federation. The B.C. minister of justice has also approved a number of other schools that train to the same standard. Upon successful completion of the program, the training facility provides a graduation certificate.

Once a dog is certified, a disabled person who is accompanied by a certified guide or service dog has the same rights, privileges, and obligations as a person who is not accompanied by a dog. Specifically, they may enter and use any accommodation, public transportation, eating place, lodging place, or any other place to which the public is invited.

Bill C-35 would require that the special role played by law enforcement animals, military animals, and service animals is specifically recognized by criminal law.

I want to carry on with something that is a little more familiar to me, and that is the service dogs that we saw in this place yesterday, the service dogs that are utilized by the RCMP, the OPP, and the Ottawa Police Service. These are the service dogs we are most accustomed to when we hear about these types of things. I want to zero in on the RCMP service dogs specifically, which I am more familiar with.

RCMP service dogs were established in 1935 by then commissioner MacBrien. He recognized that the dogs that had been utilized since 1908 in a volunteer capacity had such an immense opportunity to be utilized by police that he enacted, in 1937, an RCMP training school for police handling dogs. In 1940, the RCMP won its first case in Canada involving a dog search.

Within a very short period of time, service dogs were created with the RCMP in mind, and other police forces across Canada. They became invaluable.

In 1965, the RCMP dog services moved from Calgary to Innisfail, Alberta, where they are today. Every RCMP dog in Canada is trained at Innisfail. It is commanded by one officer in charge, ten non-commissioned officers, and six public staff members.



*Government Orders*

Police service dogs, as we saw here in this place yesterday, can be utilized for a lot of other opportunities, such as missing persons, tracking persons, finding narcotics, finding explosives, and crime scene evidence. They can track evidence that has been dumped by a person whom the police believe has done a crime. They are used for VIP protection. We will see police dogs on the Hill when an important person is visiting the Prime Minister. They are used for crowd control and in hostage situations. Most important, as I mentioned, they were utilized a lot yesterday. We may not have seen them, but they were here. These dogs are why Bill C-35 must pass through the House quickly.

• (1520)

I want to remind the House of a few incidents in Canada's history with regard to police service dogs. I will go back in time a bit so members can understand where we are today.

On May 25, 1965, the first police service dog was killed. PSD Cindy was stationed in Crescent Valley, British Columbia. She was dispatched with her handler to a situation with a barricaded person. The dog attempted an apprehension but was stabbed to death. However, as a result of the dog making the initial attack on that person, it saved two lives. It saved the handler's life and that of another investigator.

Then, on December 18, 1967, Vancouver Police Department's service dog Valiant was murdered. He was attempting to apprehend an escaped convict who was serving time for murder. He was sent into the location, located the suspect under a bed, and was shot. The dog continued to guard the suspect until the suspect was taken into custody.

One must remember when it comes to Bill C-35 and what we are trying to introduce with respect to police service dogs being harmed in action, that these dogs are unrelenting in their job. They will protect their handler at all costs. They will protect any person they are charged to protect, at all costs.

The next police service dog that was killed in action was on August 31, 1975. He was an Ontario Provincial Police dog, PSD Cloud II. Again, the dog was searching for a murder suspect. He tracked and apprehended the suspect, but the suspect had a gun and shot the police service dog.

Coming back to Bill C-35, here is what is important. In this specific case, there were no charges laid for killing the dog. There were no charges whatsoever. The importance of Bill C-35 is in recognizing that these dogs are not normal dogs that people have in their homes. These dogs have a role to play in society. They are here to protect us. They understand that their job is to do what we may not be able to do sometimes. We have a very difficult time in tracking, and doing a lot of things that dogs are more than capable of doing.

On May 11, 1976, Vancouver police dog, PSD Justin, was shot at. The dog had apprehended a suspect but was subsequently stabbed several times. The dog was able to continue holding the suspect until his handler and other investigators were able to apprehend. The dog passed away several minutes later.

Again, it shows the importance of Bill C-35 in recognizing that these dogs are invaluable. They were brought forth about 80 years

ago by the RCMP, and many years before that by other police forces. We recognize the important and valuable contribution that they give to not only police officers but to other Canadians across this land in other types of scenarios.

• (1525)

The next dog to be killed was in Chilliwack, on September 13, 1996. It was again with respect to a person search. The person ran into the bush, after what I will call a gas and dash and failing to stop for the police. The dog picked up the scent of the suspect and went into the bush. He was able to apprehend the suspect, but unfortunately was stabbed several times.

As I have mentioned many times, the dog is the lead in these types of investigations. The handlers have the utmost trust in their dogs, and the dogs have the utmost trust in their handlers. Bill C-35 recognizes this importance.

The next police service dog to be killed in action was PSD Caesar, of the Edmonton City police force, on June 23, 1998. There was an armed standoff and the dog was utilized to attack the assailant. The dog was shot point-blank and died almost immediately. However, that gave the police enough time to apprehend the suspect, and no other officers were injured.

The next police service dog was PSD Bandit, on June 25, 2000, in Nova Scotia. The police service dog was tracking a suspect who had been involved in a domestic dispute. He was able to track and find the suspect. Unfortunately, the suspect had a knife and stabbed the dog several times. The dog passed away, but the handler and other investigators were able to apprehend the suspect without further incident.

On May 20, 2001, RCMP PSD Cyr, in Saskatoon, was sent in to apprehend an armed suspect and was shot three times.

Members can see where I am going with this. The dogs are vitally important to the police from coast to coast to coast, with respect to tracking, finding, and apprehending suspects. However, from time to time they unfortunately pay the ultimate price, a price which tends to be forgotten when it is a police service animal.

There are several other incidents of police service dogs dying, but the last one I will talk about is the one mentioned in this specific bill, Bill C-35. Quanto was a police service dog for the Edmonton Police Service. He was attempting to apprehend a person who had stolen a car. The police located the suspect, but Quanto was stabbed several times and succumbed to his injuries. However, the police were able to apprehend the suspect.

In every one of these instances, the police service dogs instinctively protected their handlers and put their lives in front of their human counterparts'. Police service dogs are the epitome of man's best friend. Under command, or sometimes instinctively, they will protect their handler at all costs. As I have illustrated many times, they will fight and sacrifice themselves before they allow their handler to be put into harm's way. Bill C-35 pays tribute to these animals. It recognizes that if a person does harm to an animal there will be consequences, as there should be.

*Government Orders*

• (1530)

[Translation]

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is my first opportunity to rise in the House and ask a question after yesterday's tragic events. I realize that this is a privilege that is fundamental in our society.

I thank all of my constituents who contacted my offices to make sure that I was okay and that my staff was safe.

[English]

It is the first opportunity I have had to rise in this chamber after the tragic events of yesterday, and I do it with a heavy heart but at the same time with tremendous pride in our democracy. I would like to thank my constituents who contacted me. So many of them contacted me to see whether I was safe and my staff was safe.

• (1535)

[Translation]

I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. I must say that I do not object to the basic principle of this bill, which is to protect service animals. However, I am wondering why this bill would take away discretionary powers. Why would this government and the member who spoke not have faith in our judges? Why could a judge not protect law enforcement service animals?

[English]

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, I illustrated in my speech several times where police service dogs were murdered, and I will call it murder, and no charges were ever laid as a result of the investigation. There were a lot of other parts of the investigation where charges were laid, but it seems that the dog was just left behind, and that should never be. The dogs are actual members of a police force, and they should be recognized that way.

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his intervention, and I would like to recognize the hard-working member for Richmond Hill who brought this piece of legislation through his hard work and the recognition of service animals in his riding and across this country. There have been two gentlemen here who have put a lot of great work into getting this bill this far along.

While my honourable colleague articulated well the determination and loyalty of not just police service animals but of all service animals to the people who rely on them heavily, the one thing that is also an important factor is the investment in the animals. My hon. colleague mentioned the certification that is required. I am wondering if the member could talk about, from his experience and knowledge of this file, the costs and what it takes to get a service dog from puppy to fully functioning, capable, certified animal. What kind of investment does that represent for organizations and people and the individuals who rely on them? Could he comment on what the loss is when the animals are injured or killed and taken out of service? Beyond the emotional loss people face, what are the monetary impacts?

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, to give members an understanding of how this works, in most cases the handlers starts the dogs right from pups, from about eight to twelve weeks. They start

working and progress to where they can get to a facility such as Innisfail.

The cost to train a dog and get it to the point where it is a police service dog is approximately \$60,000. It is a significant investment that is made to ensure that the dog is trained to the ability it is going to be working with. That does not include the ongoing maintenance for the dog and the handler who does daily training. In most cases, the handler takes two to four hours of training with the dog every day to ensure that its abilities stay at a peak level and the handler's abilities stay at a peak level.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the government member who just spoke to Bill C-35.

After yesterday's events, this bill seems very appropriate, since it deals with safety and with services provided by law enforcement animals.

The government often updates the projected order of business, as it has done in this case, so that we could study Bill C-35, which we support.

However, I do not understand why more government members will not speak to this bill. If it is on the agenda, it must be important to the government. However, from what I can tell, few government members will speak to this bill.

Could my colleague tell me why?

• (1540)

[English]

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, I guess my simple answer to that would be that there are a number of us on this side who can speak quite eloquently to the subject of Bill C-35, with the number of police officers we have on this side of the House.

I would suggest that I probably have some of the most knowledge on the bill, and I believe I could speak for everyone on this side, for as long as I wanted, on the topic of Bill C-35.

**Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for a very informative speech. My question is this: What would be an amendment or procedure to add to the bill so that if a person destroyed a dog with a knife, a gun, or whatever, that person would be financially responsible for paying for the life of that dog? I wonder if that is a feasible proposition.

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, certainly, through the court process, there are restitution orders that can be applied for. As with any restitution orders that come forward, I would strongly suggest that they could be in place with regard to this without an amendment to the bill.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia for his speech.

I find a number of aspects of Bill C-35 very disturbing, including the mandatory minimum sentences.

*Government Orders*

The hon. member probably knows—if not, I will tell him—that the Department of Justice considers mandatory minimum sentences to have no demonstrable deterrent effect.

Considering the long list of cases of assault against service dogs that he presented, why is he defending the mandatory minimum sentence aspect of the bill, when it will have no effect on preventing attacks on service animals?

[English]

**Mr. David Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, I have mentioned several times in my speech police service animals that have been murdered since 1965. On very few occasions, if any, was there a charge laid with regard to the actual killing of the animal. It has always been a subsequent charge to whatever the police were investigating, but it had nothing to do with the animal itself.

The fact of the matter is that this is a murder of a police service dog that has been a huge investment and that is very near and dear to the handler. It takes a long time to replace the animal. I strongly believe that there must be a mandatory minimum sentence.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the bill. I should inform you and this House that I will be splitting my time with the fantastic member for Churchill.

Before I begin, it is incumbent upon all of us to start off by thanking the men and women in uniform who were so valiant yesterday. The terms “duty” and “valour” together were resonant for us, especially where we and many MPs were situated. To see one security guard in our caucus room standing between us and the horror that was outside is an image that is burned in my mind. I know I can speak for all MPs, but specifically for those of us who were in that room at that time, in saying that we will be forever grateful to that security guard. With that, I pay my respects and offer him a huge thanks from all of us on this side.

In many of the scenes in news clippings and news footage from yesterday's horrific incident, we saw police dogs, service dogs. It is fitting today that we are able to talk about Bill C-35, an act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals). It is a fitting opportunity for us to think about the officers who work with these fine animals.

We heard a great speech from my hon. colleague from Kootenay—Columbia. I think it is important for us to talk about this today.

When I talked about the title of the bill, I mentioned that it is also called “Quanto's law”, in memory of an Edmonton police service dog that was stabbed to death trying to stop a suspect who was fleeing. It was last year at about this time. The perpetrator pleaded guilty to animal cruelty and other offences, including evading the police, and he was sentenced to 26 months in prison and banned from owning a pet for 25 years.

It is incumbent upon us to ensure that we find ways to protect these service animals. It is important for us to support the bill and get it to committee. Part of the bill talks about mandatory minimum sentences and minimum sentences in general. It is incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to ensure that every bill we look at has the opportunity to go to committee and that we bring forward stakeholders and experts to talk about the importance of making

sure that the laws being presented by the government are meeting societal values and are protecting animals and people.

When we talk about animal cruelty, especially when we think about what happened to Quanto in Edmonton, it brings together the picture of protecting all animals. I can think of an incident in Sudbury when the community rallied around a dog we called Buddy when he was shot in the face by his owner and left to die on the side of the road. He was found by some great people and taken to a vet's emergency clinic, where he had surgery. The community rallied around Buddy the dog and raised enough money to pay the vet bills, but unfortunately, Buddy died a couple of days later.

• (1545)

While we are here talking about service dogs, we also need to consider the importance of animal cruelty. The things that happened to Buddy the dog should not go unpunished.

In looking at some of the other police service dogs over the last little bit, I talked about Quanto. The RCMP unveiled a monument to Quanto, which is something that I think is quite important. Recently, in the Northwest Territories, we have seen a dog help RCMP officers when they responded to an armed and barricaded adult male in a house. The individual was arrested five hours later without incident. The RCMP used its emergency response team, crisis negotiation team and a police dog in the arrest. Again, a police dog is playing an important role in the police force.

However, we also have to talk about service dogs in general, because the bill includes them. In my previous employment before being elected here, I had the opportunity of doing a couple of jobs in which I was able to work with animals. In the first job, I was a supervisor for residential homes for individuals with developmental handicaps, and there were many dogs being utilized by these individuals to help them with their day-to-day lives.

I would like to focus specifically on the service dogs that are now being trained to work with individuals with autism.

We have been seeing the prevalence of autism increase across the country. There are more individuals living their day-to-day lives with autism. However, there is now evidence showing that these service dogs for individuals with autism are helping, children specifically, with social interaction, relationships and the expansion of verbal and non-verbal communication skills. They are teaching them life skills, increasing their interest in activities and decreasing their stress.

If any of us in this House have ever worked with an individual with autism, know or have someone in their family with autism, they would know that many of the skills I mentioned previously come difficult for some. To ensure they can live active participatory lives within the community, it is fantastic to hear that we can provide them with a service dog so that they can become more independent, which is something that I think we all want in this House.

From coast to coast to coast across our great land, from British Columbia to St. John's, Newfoundland, we would like to make sure that these animals are protected, because they are aiding some of our most vulnerable citizens, taking them out of the category of being vulnerable and making them more independent.

*Government Orders*

I was also the executive director of the United Way right before I was elected. I was able to work closely with the CNIB, who obviously have service dogs for individuals who are visually impaired. The St. John Ambulance program in Sudbury has service animals who are certified therapy dogs, and we are talking about certified animals being protected in this bill. These dogs provide therapy to seniors and individuals going through difficult times, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

I am very happy to stand today to speak to the bill and talk about the importance of it. I am glad I have been able to speak about sending the bill to committee where we can really look at some of the provisions that the government has put in and make sure that it is the right thing to do, and that, I think, is important.

• (1550)

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday was indeed a very different day for all of us here. It was a stark reminder that we do live in troubled times. At the same time, it afforded us an opportunity to perhaps reflect and it reminded all of us that we have a lot more things common in this House, as parliamentarians, than we might sometimes think. I want to join my colleagues on all sides of the House in expressing my appreciation and gratitude to the law enforcement officers, under the guidance and leadership of our Sergeant-at-Arms, for their heroic efforts yesterday in ensuring all of our safety, so a big thanks to all of them.

I want to thank my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Sudbury, for his speech on this particular piece of legislation that seeks to protect police service animals and service animals in general. I have a simple question to ask the hon. member, and I appreciate his indication of support for the bill.

With his experience in the United Way and in his previous life, and the knowledge that he has had over his lifetime, could he share with us his sentiments on the importance of this legislation to police services across the country that have canine units and horse units, as well as to the families that are availing themselves of the services of these selfless animals, which are at their service every day?

• (1555)

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, first in response to the parliamentary secretary's comments, I do agree. In this House we have a lot more commonalities than we might think some days. While we may be on this side and they are on that side, we still walk out the same door every day and we still try to make our communities a better place, no matter which side of the House we sit on.

In relation to seeing what I have seen, I am going to use a very specific story. I have seen a young boy who had autism who had some very difficult times in his life and, not to spill too many beans because it is very personal for that person, was not able to really be functional in the community. Over a couple of years of having his dog—his friend and his mate as he calls him—the young boy is now going to school on his own with the dog. The school has had to make some accommodations, but it has and his life is completely changed. This dog is his life companion and he has made so many strides because of the importance of this dog, that we as parliamentarians should be able to do something to help these animals as well.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Sudbury.

He told us about the mission of service animals, particularly for autistic children and young adults. I would like him to expand on that. Could he explain how it all helps the community in general?

[*English*]

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, it helps the community by giving more independence and more community involvement to individuals who sometimes have been marginalized. In this day and age, when we can do anything to ensure that individuals who have a diagnosis of some sort are no longer marginalized, if it is giving them a dog, ensuring they have the services they need, ensuring they get the funding that they need, then we as parliamentarians need to start looking at doing that.

However, when it comes to the specific use of service animals, we have seen numerous cases of individuals having their lives changed. Individuals who go from having vision and sight to losing their vision and becoming blind or having a visual impairment, they get their dog and they get their freedom and their life back, as they say. They can get back out in the community, get back on public transit, get out and do grocery shopping, things that we overlook and sometimes take for granted.

As I said, I am so pleased to see individuals with autism now making huge strides because of the support they are getting from service animals.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to follow my esteemed colleague from Sudbury. In his speech, he relayed our party's position on Bill C-35, which, as we know, is an act to amend the Criminal Code referring to law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals.

New Democrats have made it clear that we support the bill at second reading and believe that it should be studied at committee. We want to study the bill more closely in committee so we can hear from experts on two problematic clauses, the introduction of minimum sentences and the introduction of consecutive sentences. We know that, concretely, the bill would amend section 445 of the Criminal Code and create a new offence for killing or injuring a service animal, law enforcement animal or military animal while the animal is on duty. It would also set a minimum sentence of six months if a law enforcement animal is killed while the offence is being perpetrated. Finally, it would provide for the sentences imposed on a person to be served consecutively to any other punishment imposed on the person for an offence arising out of the same event or series of events.

As we have pointed out, there is no disagreement about the need to support the work of our security personnel and to ensure the safety and humane treatment of the dogs that they depend on. In fact, the tragic events of yesterday reminded us how important it is to have every tool at one's disposal to ensure safety. This morning I noticed one of the service dogs with an officer, making sure that we in Parliament are safe.

*Government Orders*

I, like my colleagues, share the sentiment that we are very appreciative of the brave women and men of the police forces, the Canadian Forces, and the House of Commons security who did everything they could to keep us safe yesterday and are doing so today, and often, as we saw yesterday, at great risk to themselves.

Getting back to the bill, New Democrats are concerned that, once again, the devil is in the details. This is a laudable bill that has been tainted by the introduction of minimum sentencing, which clearly reflects the continued repressive agenda that the government has been bringing forward. The government is also showing its desire to deprive the courts of their discretion in sentencing. We believe that the Conservatives should be more aware of the consequences of minimum and consecutive sentencing for the criminal justice system and that it is important the bill go to committee because we need to hear from experts about the consequences of minimum and consecutive sentencing.

We know that Bill C-35, also referred to as Quanto's law, is in memory of an Edmonton police service dog that was stabbed to death trying to stop a fleeing suspect in October 2013. While we believe it is important that penalties exist for those who attack law enforcement animals, we are concerned that this is a back door attempt by the government to once again bring in minimum sentencing, which we have seen over and over again in various pieces of legislation.

Sadly, we see today in this bill and have seen in other bills, such as the Internet privacy bill, which hinge on a particular traumatic event, whether it is the suicide of young women who were bullied or in this case an enforcement animal that was killed on the job, that it is a way to get to that issue, but to do so in the most regressive way by emphasizing the importance of mandatory minimum sentencing and once again depriving the courts of their ability to apply discretion.

I am particularly concerned that with such traumatic events, the government tries to portray that it is the only one that cares about it and anyone who expresses concern, has questions or critiques the bill is automatically on the wrong side of the debate. I share that concern when it comes to the way we are going to deal with yesterday's tragedy.

● (1600)

I am very proud that today in the House we all rose to show solidarity with each other and with Canadians, but I am concerned about the potential for division based on legitimate disagreements around principles—legitimate disagreements that are integral to our democracy—and the possible vilification of those who do not agree with the government's agenda.

In this case I, along with my colleagues, firmly believe it is important to bring Bill C-35 to committee to have a vibrant debate on it, to hear from experts, and to look at how we can eliminate the most regressive elements of this bill, elements that have little to do with preventing the senseless deaths of law enforcement animals and more to do with padding the Conservative crime and punishment agenda.

I would be remiss if I did not express an additional concern.

There is much interest in seeing this bill go forward, and we have also indicated our support for it, but it is interesting to me that so

many members on the government side are so passionate about this issue. Granted, it is a serious issue, and I hear the references to animal cruelty, a very serious and tragic practice that still exists in our country and something that we must eradicate, but it strikes me that sometimes we do not hear that same kind of gusto or drive from the government side to deal with other aspects of disrespectful and even, I would say, neglectful treatment of humans in our own country.

I am reminded of that this week as the human rights tribunal hears from indigenous community members and indigenous leaders about the cruel conditions in which first nations youth live. These conditions unfortunately point to neglect by the federal government and point to the way in which the federal government has let go of its fiduciary obligation to the well-being, health, education, and overall wellness of first nations youth. Instead it continues with an agenda and rhetoric that amount to status quo. The government says it is doing everything it can, that it has done more than other governments have, but that is not a good enough excuse.

As an MP who represents a part of this country where we have high rates of poverty, particularly child poverty and poverty among first nations youth, I am used to visiting communities where I see kids who are not dressed for cold weather, who go to school hungry, who live in mould-infested homes with 12 or 15 other relatives. I am always struck by the fact that it is unacceptable in Canada, in the year 2014, that children of any background have to live like that. It is not of their own volition or of their own choice that these children live in some cruel conditions, but as a result of a very dark history of systemic policies.

While we sit here and talk about the importance of respect and protection for law enforcement animals, I would also like to see that same kind of commitment and interest, both in messaging and in action, for humans, particularly for children in our society, our most vulnerable citizens.

I believe that is why we are here. We are here to make the right decisions. Whether in terms of our security forces or our communities, Canadians expect that kind of leadership from all of us.

● (1605)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank and again congratulate the hon. member for Churchill for her speech, which explained the connection between some very important aspects that she mentioned.

In addition, she always defends the most vulnerable residents in her riding, and does so fairly and appropriately. I highly commend her for defending them. We sometimes seem to forget what is going on in our own country, and we shut our eyes from time to time.

Would my colleague like to say more about the government's heavy-handed tendency to take away the discretion of judges, and how that tendency is often seen in the bills introduced by this government?

*Government Orders*

•(1610)

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comment. The point she made is at the core of our analysis here in this House.

We know it, and young people learn it in school: judicial independence is part of the foundation of our country, our governance and our democracy. We in the NDP are very concerned that the government takes every opportunity to undermine this independence and to interfere with our judges. That is unacceptable.

We have expressed this concern many times and we are doing so again today. We hope that we will be able to eliminate these most problematic aspects of the bill in committee.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Churchill for her excellent speech.

I would like to talk about a corollary. On this side of the House, members have introduced bills to toughen animal cruelty laws. We are not talking specifically about service animals such as law enforcement animals, but all animals, be they pets or the animals around us in the waters and elsewhere. My colleague from Parkdale—High Park introduced such a bill.

I would like to hear what the member for Churchill has to say about the dedication and commitment of the official opposition to adopting tougher animal cruelty measures.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that important question.

I also want to commend our colleague, the member for Parkdale—High Park, who introduced a bill on animal cruelty. This is proof of our initiative and our leadership on this issue. My colleague has been involved in this for years.

We support the idea behind this bill, but we have some serious concerns about some flaws in the bill that have nothing to do with its objective.

We hope that Conservative members in committee will have the goodwill to make improvements, in order to protect animals and to avoid undermining our judges and our judicial system.

[*English*]

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by indicating I will be splitting my time with the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

As with all my other colleagues, it is my pleasure to rise today and have the privilege of being able to speak on a day such as this after the tragic events of yesterday. I have had a chance outside of this chamber to express my appreciation to the Security Services of the House of Commons and Constable Samearn Son, who suffered a wound trying to stop the attacker from entering this honourable place, and especially Sergeant-at-Arms Vickers, who ended the threat.

I would also say that on a day like today after a day like yesterday, given the subject of Bill C-35, an act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to law enforcement animals, military animals, and

service animals, that my mind is drawn to a monument not far from where Corporal Cirillo was murdered.

Just a little farther down Elgin Street and to the left is Confederation Park, where the Animals in War monument has been in place since 2012. It is a very poignant monument. It shows a German Shepherd dog from World War I with a cape that contains various items that the war dog was assisting a soldier in carrying. There is a picture taken on the day of dedication showing RCMP Corporal Luc Patenaude and his own police dog, Cujo, standing alongside the war dog monument.

I would like to read the Animals in War plaque, which is highly relevant to the whole idea of sacrifice that we were reminded of yesterday—the theme of sacrifice, and ultimately the fundamental humanity of a relationship with animals that the member for Kootenay—Columbia so eloquently spoke of.

The plaque says the following:

For centuries animals have demonstrated an enduring partnership with humans during times of war. They have served as means of transportation, beasts of burden, messengers, protectors and mascots. Still today, dogs use their unique, sharply tuned instincts to detect mine clusters, and conduct search and rescue operations. We remember the contribution and sacrifice of all animals.

It is a marvellously done monument and it helps remind us of this connection between animals and ourselves. The way we treat animals in our society is also a measure of our own humanity. Sadly, I believe our criminal laws, not to mention provincial laws across this country, are sadly lagging behind other jurisdictions.

I am proud and happy to say that I count an animal literally as a member of my family. That is the way I think of it with respect to my mini-schnauzer. I personally believe that animals' presence in our lives humanizes our existence. We can think of some of the examples from my colleague from Sudbury and the detailed stories from the member for Kootenay—Columbia about the particular importance of animals in the police services, but we can also think of animal therapy in seniors homes, hospitals, and so on, which increasingly is being recognized as part of advanced cutting-edge therapy going back to basics being part of the future.

I was touched by how the member for Kootenay—Columbia spoke. He used the word “murder”. He emphasized that a couple of times in his speech and then in his answers to questions. He wants us to not think of this as just the killing of an animal or the death of an animal, but its murder. We do not use that language unless we are talking about a profound relationship in which partnership, friendship, and even a familial bond is part of how we think about the loss of that animal.

From my perspective, I think the member hit the nail exactly on the head. This is exactly how we should be thinking of animals in the professions he listed: enforcement animals, military animals, and service animals.

*Government Orders*

●(1615)

We also have to remember that, in certain contexts—war dogs being one example, but police dogs in particular—it is not just that they are partners. If we were honest with ourselves, we would say the form of service they represent is sacrificial. They are deployed in circumstances that can lead to their being more likely to suffer harm, if not be killed, than their partner or handler. Therefore, the idea of something extra being owed to these animals is something I have absolutely no problem with.

However, the understanding behind this bill cannot stop at the gates of these particular animals. If we push further on exactly what is motivating the extra protection for these animals in the circumstances in which they can be hurt or killed, we would find ourselves thinking about animal rights in a very different way, across the board. We would be thinking about cruelty to animals in Canada in a broader frame.

I would remind you, Mr. Speaker, as Deputy Speaker, that you introduced a private member's bill, Bill C-414, which has now been taken up by the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine. You tabled that bill on the very day that I was sworn into this House, and it was my distinct pleasure to second that bill.

For the benefit of everyone in the House, I would like to quote the words you said when introducing it. You stated:

The bill would do two basic things. It first recognizes that animals are sentient beings as opposed to a piece of wood or a piece of furniture, which is the way the Criminal Code currently treats them. The other thing that it would do has a very clear consequence. The number of convictions for animal cruelty would increase dramatically under the Criminal Code. We have estimates that only one in a thousand cases of animal cruelty can result in convictions under the Criminal Code, and this would address that issue.

The bill I referred to, which is now being taken up by what is currently Bill C-592, is part of an NDP commitment as a strong advocate for ending all levels of cruelty to animals, including such things as forced breeding. This can only be accomplished by repealing old sections of the Criminal Code dealing with animal cruelty and proposing newer and tougher laws to protect animals. I believe that it cannot be done only on a piecemeal basis. Rather, it has to be done by government legislation to create a proper overhaul. Although this bill is a government bill, it is in the mode of piecemeal legislation. I would very much urge the government to think about the potential for this bill to be the start of something that is more of an overhaul, that looks at the picture from a more general perspective than simply this deserving case of service, police enforcement, and military animals.

With that, I would like to emphasize that the bill has my full support to go to committee. I believe my colleagues have the same view on that. However, I would urge the movers of the bill, my colleagues from Richmond Hill and Kootenay, who have taken the lead on it, to ask whether or not the elements of mandatory minimums and necessary mandatory consequential sentencing are really needed for what they are trying to do. They have the support of this side of the House. The key is to actually criminalize in a way that cannot be avoided, from a prosecution point of view, and to make sure the ability to prosecute in the right circumstances is there. The idea of taking discretionary judgment away from judges when it comes to sentences seems to me to be an entirely different issue from

what ultimately was motivating my colleague across the way in his speech. It is simply not necessary for what he is trying to achieve.

The last thing is that this is a bill that, yet again, because it has mandatory minimums, will raise issues around constitutionality. It once again reminds us that we have bills coming before this House for which we have to rely on the competence and good faith of the Minister of Justice to have vetted the bill to make sure it meets the current constitutional standards for sentencing. I can never be convinced that is the case, because we never see the legal opinions.

●(1620)

Once again, this is the third time in two weeks I have asked the government to consider, at committee, introducing the legal opinion that was given to make sure this particular mandatory minimum would not offend the charter.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Toronto—Danforth for his excellent speech.

I know that he is very concerned about the idea of mandatory minimums. I would like to know what he thinks about the fundamental issue of mandatory minimums. In 2012, the Ontario Superior Court invalidated some provisions regarding mandatory minimums in the case of two sentences for firearms possession. The Canadian government will in all likelihood go to the Supreme Court to defend its version of the facts.

Nonetheless, the Superior Court of Ontario, the Canadian Bar Association and the Barreau du Québec all believe that mandatory minimums could well be unconstitutional. This is an argument that came up in committee when Bill C-10 was being studied.

I would like to know what the member thinks about the Superior Court of Ontario's ruling and about the constitutionality of mandatory minimums, as proposed in this bill.

●(1625)

**Mr. Craig Scott:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

It was not just one ruling. In fact, there were others before it, and perhaps one or two that also found that the mandatory minimum sentences violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This is really a question of proportionality and the fact that the sentence must actually fit the crime. Mandatory minimum sentences do not normally cause problems, in that they are rather weak sentences imposed by the judges. Nonetheless, there are times when the mandatory minimum sentence is really not suited to the crime that the person committed.

That is what the Supreme Court and other courts are essentially concerned about when it comes to constitutionality.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I will move on to something else that is still related to this issue. I asked the hon. member for Churchill a question. I would also like to have that member's opinion about the will of this side of the House to impose harsher sentences in cases of animal cruelty.

This bill deals specifically with law enforcement animals or other service animals. I think we on this side of the House have shown that we have no objection to the basic philosophy underlying this government bill, as was clearly shown by the introduction of Bill C-232 by our colleague from Parkdale—High Park.

I would like to hear the hon. member's comments on how this side of the House feels about the philosophy behind this government bill.

**Mr. Craig Scott:** Mr. Speaker, it is precisely as my colleague from Churchill said: we have no problem with the underlying principle or motivation behind this bill.

What I was trying to say at the end of my speech is that mandatory minimum sentences do not need to be in this bill. We support the idea of penalties for the offences set out in the bill, but mandatory minimum sentences do not need to be added to achieve the objective at the core of the speech made by the member for Kootenay—Columbia.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be able to rise in this House. In fact, like a number of my colleagues, this is the first time I have had the opportunity to do so since yesterday's incidents. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sergeant-at-Arms Vickers, of course, but also the House of Commons security services. They did an outstanding job, just like the police forces who came to the rescue and backed up Parliament's security officers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my staff. We are talking about MPs and parliamentary employees who were directly affected by the incidents, but there are also many offices around Parliament, around Parliament Hill, occupied by those close to us, including our office staff and the people in the clerk's office. Those people were also affected, and I would like to thank them for all their work and congratulate them on their exemplary conduct during that difficult time.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of my riding of Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques for the support they showed me by sending me messages at my office or on social media. I greatly appreciated it, and I would like to thank them for their prayers and support.

I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-35, which amends the Criminal Code with regard to law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals, for example animals for the blind. As many of my colleagues mentioned, we are going to support this bill at second reading because we support the basic principle of the bill. We hope that it will be carefully studied in committee. However, we hope that the committee will pay special attention to one particular aspect of the bill, and that is the mandatory minimum sentencing. This has been discussed in the House quite often, and it will be the focus of my speech today.

The bill imposes mandatory minimum sentencing. It seeks to amend section 445 of the Criminal Code and impose a minimum

sentence of six months if a law enforcement animal is killed when a crime is committed.

The creation of an offence for injuring or killing these animals as they perform their duties is a commendable goal. There are already provisions in the Criminal Code related to cruelty to animals. We also want to strengthen those provisions, but the government is taking advantage of a measure that seems acceptable to most, if not all, members of the House—I believe—to once again impose mandatory minimum sentencing.

That is a serious problem. Since 2008, this government has been imposing minimum sentences. However, minimum sentences do not reduce the likelihood that a crime will be committed. That has been shown time and time again. No credible scientific or sociological studies have proven the contrary. The government does not rely on studies that show the impact of imposing such a measure when passing or proposing potentially acceptable or effective bills. In my opinion, the government imposes these sentences because of its ideology. If these sentences are not based on science or demonstrable facts, I do not believe there is any other explanation for the government's actions, and I find that really unfortunate.

In the question I asked my colleague from Toronto—Danforth, one of the things I mentioned was one of the most recent cases handled by a provincial court. In two cases involving two provisions related to weapon possession, the minimum sentence was overturned by the Ontario Superior Court because it was cruel and unusual punishment and not in line with the offence. That is nothing new. It has been mentioned many, many times by extremely respectable law organizations, including the Canadian Bar Association and the Barreau du Québec. Those are just two of the many associations and organizations that have told us exactly the same thing.

● (1630)

It comes as no surprise that the provincial courts are overturning federal proposals and legislation. In fact, we had already been warned in Parliament, in the House of Commons and during committee work, that this provision on mandatory minimum sentences would have this exact outcome.

The government obviously passed this measure, among others, for weapon possession. Quite recently, the government even capped it all off with the law and order omnibus bill, the bill to amend the Criminal Code, by sprinkling minimum sentences throughout Bill C-10, particularly for offences related to drugs, possession and possession with intent to traffic. No matter what offence the government's legislation targets, the reasoning is the same. The possibility of committing a crime is not reduced because a mandatory minimum sentence exists, because the person who would commit these crimes, for whatever reason, will not consider the provision. That has been demonstrated over and over again.



*Government Orders*

I would also like to point out that this is not a question of cosmetics or even a question of effectiveness. This is a fundamental question about the functioning of our government. Indeed, the provision on mandatory minimum sentencing changes our accountability system. Why? Because the power to determine a sentence, which should belong to a judge and therefore the judicial branch of government, is completely wiped out. This power is being transferred to one of the three main components of government, which are the executive, legislative and judicial branches. It is being transferred from the legislative arm to the executive arm. Even though we are talking about the provincial executive branch, since prosecution, sentencing and the administration of justice are under provincial jurisdiction, the fact remains that, ultimately, prosecutors have to answer to the various justice ministers, assuming of course they are not federal prosecutors who answer to the federal Minister of Justice. A power that should remain entirely judicial is being transferred to the executive branch.

Why am I saying this? Because the judges who determine sentences cannot do so, and the prosecutors are the ones who can ultimately use this whole range of mandatory minimum sentences during the review prior to the charge to determine the sentence themselves. Now, because of mandatory minimum sentences, prosecutors have more latitude to decide what sentence should be imposed than the judge who hears the evidence and arguments from the Crown and the defence.

I think it is just common sense to allow a judge, who has all the necessary tools, to determine the sentence and not leave that to one of the parties, namely the Crown, which does not have the defendant's interests at heart, in which case the process is biased.

When we talk about mandatory minimums, there is a standard of effectiveness that the government is not meeting. This is also a question of governance. Important powers that belong to judges are being transferred to the executive branch of the government. It is appalling that despite all the warnings that were given, the government is stubbornly going ahead with this anyway.

I think that all of the members of the official opposition, and I assume the members of the other parties in the House, would have been completely in favour of studying this bill quickly so as to really toughen up the sentences for individuals convicted of cruelty towards military animals, law enforcement animals and service animals. However, the government decided to take a more difficult route and, once again, raised the question of mandatory minimum sentences. That is the question that we will be bringing up in committee. We hope that the government will listen closely.

● (1635)

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, which really went to the heart of the issue with this bill.

The aim of this bill is very commendable, but its methods are questionable. That is why we want to examine it in committee.

I would like my colleague to talk about the two bills introduced by our colleagues, in particular Bill C-592, which was introduced by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine. It specifically

targeted acts of aggression towards police animals and established aggravating circumstances.

Could my colleague outline the advantages of using aggravating circumstances instead of mandatory minimum sentences?

● (1640)

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, this bill shows that there are deterrents that will always be constitutional, and we know they are, contrary to mandatory minimum sentences, which leading experts seem to think are not.

This issue is about members on this side of the House wanting to be stricter in animal cruelty cases, an issue that is often ignored but not trivial. We are talking mainly about pets, the animals we call friends.

My colleague from Toronto—Danforth quite rightly mentioned that, by their presence alone, these animals make us more human. They give back as much as they take, so this is not a trivial issue but a very important one.

We need this protection for all of the animals in our lives, especially for our pets, police animals, military animals and service animals.

This bill clearly shows the official opposition party's desire to go in that direction. We hope that the government will reconsider imposing mandatory minimum sentences in this case.

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech because he did an excellent job of explaining the official opposition's reservations about these minimum sentences.

As he so capably demonstrated, this is not the first time the government has included its infamous minimum sentences in one of its bills.

Can my colleague expand on how these minimum sentences undermine judges' discretionary power? Can he also tell us why it is important for our democratic society to separate the legislative branch and the judicial branch?

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question. I think she was basically agreeing with me when I was presenting my arguments on governance because I saw her nodding her head. Indeed, she is absolutely right.

I think we need to trust our judges when it comes to minimum sentences. Our judges, who are appointed by the government, can hear the entire background in any legal case. Obviously, they all have their own way of proceeding based on their different experiences. However, they have the law to draw upon, and they must rely on the law. The law will give them a direction to move toward.

However, imposing mandatory minimums denies them the opportunity to consider the context of the offence committed in their decision-making process. By imposing the same type of decision, we are placing a restriction on judges that, quite often, is in no way in line with the offence, depending on the circumstances, which only the judge is able to consider.

*Government Orders*

In this sense, taking away this discretion from judges and putting it in the hands of the prosecutor, namely, the executive branch, is a change in governance. It is unconstitutional and extremely detrimental to the social fabric.

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am very proud to rise in the House today and resume my work as an MP and as a representative of my constituents from LaSalle—Émard. I am very pleased that we have the opportunity today to debate Bill C-35, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals).

I would also like to say that I am very pleased to share my time with the hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

I would be remiss if I did not say a few words about yesterday's events. I must say that I felt safe at all times. From the very start, we were assisted by a security guard who entered the room where we were gathered. He really took charge of our group and ensured that we were safe and protected. I join all the members who spoke before me in thanking all the Parliamentary staff, including the security staff, and the police officers and the members of the RCMP who joined them to ensure that we could be in the House today to debate a bill and continue our work.

I would also like to thank my team and all the Parliamentary staff who experienced these disturbing events with us and who also did an incredible job. I commend my team in the House and also my constituency team with whom I was able to communicate, and who in turn informed the community about what was happening and reassured people that we were in good hands with the security team.

The bill before us today talks about the special relationship between people and animals, not just service animals, but also those in our lives. I am an agronomist by training and as such, and as an interpretive guide at an agricultural museum, I had the opportunity to learn more about farm animals, which are also service animals. I know that Canada's farmers and agricultural producers take special care of these animals and one of my concerns is to make sure that we continue to always have very high standards when it comes to livestock. The same goes for transporting animals and for slaughter facilities. All this must be handled properly. I believe that Canada must continue to have very high standards, whether we are talking about raising, transporting, or slaughtering farm animals.

I am raising this point because we do not talk about it very often. We are becoming more and more removed from our primary agriculture. Although we are still close, because we eat every day, we must also think about the farmers and the animals that serving us in a completely different way. Farm animals, just as much as the other service animals, deserve proper treatment, and even more than that.

● (1645)

Usually, service animals are dogs. As the saying goes, a dog is a man's best friend. Over the years, we have found many ways for dogs to help humans because of certain traits.

I for one am generally apprehensive of dogs. When I go door to door, I admit that I have had experiences with canines that were sometimes positive, sometimes not. I think all politicians, like most

letter carriers, have mixed feelings when it comes to dogs, because these encounters are not always pleasant.

However, when I go door to door, I have the opportunity to meet many seniors who live alone and have pets, often dogs. For people living alone, these animals are valuable companions in their lives. That is why I must acknowledge the work, service and assistance that these animals provide to people in my community of LaSalle—Émard.

My colleague from Sudbury also talked about the importance of the assistance provided by service dogs and animals for persons with disabilities. Everyone knows about Mira dogs, which accompany the blind. There are also service dogs for persons with disabilities or, as my colleague mentioned, people with autism. These animals act not only as companions and assistants, but also as intermediaries when it comes to interacting with other people.

Furthermore, I want to pay tribute to the K-9 squad, which helped secure the perimeter yesterday. These dogs provided a very valuable service.

Now, I would like to talk about Bill C-35, which we are supporting at second reading. Our only concerns are very important, and we have expressed them on a number of occasions. This is nothing new; we have extensively debated our concerns in the House, and we have brought them to the attention of the government. Our concerns are about mandatory minimums.

We support the services provided by the K-9 squad and assistance animals, but we do not understand why this bill needs to implement mandatory minimums, since they undermine the discretionary powers of judges. I will give an example.

I will admit that I have a general fear of dogs. I have no intentions of committing an offence, of course, but I do not know how I would react if I were to be attacked by a dog. At such a time, you essentially react by defending yourself. That is why I would like to give the judge, and not the legislative authority, the discretion to impose a minimum sentence.

Judges, defence lawyers and crown prosecutors are in the best position to decide on a fair and appropriate sentence in each case.

● (1650)

We all applaud the work of service animals, especially in light of yesterday's events, when we were all able to see first-hand what they do. However, I must express my opposition to the institution of mandatory minimums, which undermine the discretionary powers of judges.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Parliament's security services, which did such an incredible, professional job. I also want to express my solidarity with all of the House employees who were caught up in the tragic events that transpired yesterday.

The bill seems to be part of an ideology that flies in the face of judicial independence in our country and seems to impose political opinions on our judges.

Does my colleague feel that this trend is jeopardizing the separation between the legal and the political?

*Government Orders*

•(1655)

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments and reiterate my thanks to all the House staff, particularly the security services, who welcome us, protect us and guard us every day.

We talked about our democracy a lot yesterday. Separation of powers is at the heart of democracy. Canada has a healthy democracy. The proof is in the fact that we, as representatives of Canadians, debate bills here in the House.

However, we need to be able to benefit from the breadth of judicial experience, which has existed for far longer than I have been in the House. Cases need to be judged based on the experience of past judges and our Criminal Code.

Amending the Criminal Code is no small matter. The current government has made a great number of changes, and we still do not know all the long-term implications of those changes. That is why I find it very troubling that the government wants to impose mandatory minimums in this bill.

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from LaSalle—Émard for her speech.

This is an important bill, but it has disturbing implications. One of the things I worry about is the false sense of security the government is trying to create by imposing cumulative sentences and mandatory minimum sentences.

It is also troubling to see that the NDP is doing most of the debating here. It is quite appalling actually. As my colleague said, changes to the Criminal Code should be made with caution and with the public interest in mind, while respecting our institutions, the three pillars of our democracy.

What does my colleague think of the contempt shown by the government and the lack of substantive debate? During the committee review, does she believe the government will be open to reconsidering certain aspects of the bill?

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for taking the government to task, especially given that this is a democracy and we should be able to have thorough debates. This also applies to our committees. We are sending this bill to committee, which is where we can make changes based on the testimony of the experts who appear.

I would ask all of my colleagues on all sides of the House to please listen to the experts, who will give us the facts, so that we can amend the bill properly.

•(1700)

**Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, and especially the member for LaSalle—Émard for sharing her time with me. I also want to congratulate her for her comments earlier today on the state of security on Parliament Hill. She gave a beautiful tribute to our security guards.

I find it quite fitting that today we are debating Bill C-35. As the title clearly says, this is an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals. We recently witnessed some rather extreme violence on

Parliament Hill. We must pay tribute to those who are there every day to protect us and protect the institution of Parliament and the parliamentarians, elected members, senators, workers and assistants who work on Parliament Hill. We owe a lot to the security guards who were there to protect us yesterday.

The fact that we are debating Bill C-35 today highlights the fact that officers are not the only ones who are there. There are also service dogs. We saw this yesterday, and we see them all the time. These animals are prepared to risk their lives, consciously or not, to protect our society. We owe them a lot. That is why the bill before us today is laudable. It is a good bill, which has been called Quanto's law.

[*English*]

Quanto's Law is in memory of an Edmonton police service dog that was stabbed to death trying to stop a fleeing suspect in October 2013. A certain suspect pleaded guilty to animal cruelty and other offences, including evading police. He was sentenced to 26 months in prison and banned from owning a pet for 25 years.

It is particularly interesting that the current law as it stands, article 445 of the Criminal Code, already establishes penalties for committing an offence, whether it be killing an animal, maiming an animal, wounding, poisoning, et cetera.

Certainly, when it comes to police dogs, it would certainly be incorporated into this law, but we already have a law. The law right now proposes that a person who commits an offence, if it is an indictable offence, is liable to a maximum of five years imprisonment. If the person is found guilty of an offence on summary conviction, the person is liable to one or both of a maximum of \$10,000 in fines and/or imprisonment up to 18 months. This law would change that.

[*Translation*]

This is subtle, but I will try to explain. The bill would amend section 445 such that anyone found guilty of attacking an animal could be sentenced to up to five years in prison, and the minimum punishment is six months in prison.

Once again, the government is imposing a minimum sentence—and I will come back to that shortly—in cases where a law enforcement animal is killed while aiding a law enforcement officer in enforcing the law, where the offence is prosecuted by indictment. If a law enforcement animal is injured or killed in the line of duty, the punishment for the offence would be served consecutively to any other punishment imposed on the person.

Currently, when judges sentence offenders, the sentences can be served at the same time or consecutively. When they are consecutive, that means the time adds up and the sentence is cumulative. In this situation, someone who kills a animal on duty that is actively trying to prevent the commission of a crime will receive a consecutive sentence. It will not be consecutive if the animal in question is helping a police officer who is trying to prevent a crime. The nuance is subtle, but it is there.

*Government Orders*

● (1705)

Nevertheless, this bill is flawed. It includes minimum sentences, thereby removing the judge's discretion in some situations. The trial judge knows the facts and is perfectly capable of deciding what sentence should be imposed.

When judges are forced to hand down a particular sentence, they are very reluctant to do so. Some judges have even refused to impose minimum sentences. Cases go to the appeal court or even the Supreme Court, which decides whether the sentence is constitutional.

Why would the government seek to implement a measure that could be deemed unconstitutional when it could have immediately moved forward with a bill that was worthwhile in itself? The mandatory minimum sentence makes it very hard to support this bill. Members, at least those in the opposition, should support this bill at second reading. That way, we could examine it in committee and have a more extensive debate. We could invite experts to appear who will explain the consequences of this measure.

I believe that there will be a consensus. The bill is worthwhile and the amendment to section 445 of the Criminal Code is a good idea, except for the fact that the government is going to impose a minimum sentence.

If the government were prepared to remove this aspect of the bill, I believe we would be more likely to reach a consensus among ourselves and with the witnesses who would appear before the committee to participate in a debate on the bill. In my opinion, many experts would not agree with the bill because of the minimum sentences. Regardless, I would like to hear from these experts, listen to their opinions and better understand whether they consider that the bill is constitutional and has merit and whether it should move forward.

We have time to send this bill to committee. I hope that we will have a very interesting and thorough debate. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have once again made a rather fundamental error in the wording of the bill. That is something that the Conservative government seems to be intent on doing. It has no qualms about constantly adding minimum sentences to bills.

I would like the government to look at what is happening in other jurisdictions. Quebec has determined that cruelty toward animals must be redefined. Harsher sentences are needed. This issue really needs to be examined, and more appropriate sentences are required. In Quebec, this debate will certainly take place, regardless of what happens with the bill before us.

With this bill, particularly given the mandatory minimum, the province in question will end up with people who have been found guilty in its provincial prisons. The province will have to foot the bill. Once again, the federal government is going to download costs to the provinces without providing any assistance.

Minimum sentences do not work for several reasons. One of the main reasons is that the province will once again be left with the costs imposed by the federal government, without any assistance from the feds. I would remind the House that section 718 of the Criminal Code sets out certain principles on which sentences are

supposed to be based. I have to wonder whether mandatory minimums reflect the principles of section 718.

● (1710)

Yes, the Supreme Court has ruled on this issue in the past, and it is important that we also examine it in the House and in committee.

I support this bill at second reading, but I hope the experts will explain the consequences to us in full.

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I am sure he will agree that the proof is in the pudding. He expressed certain concerns about some aspects of the bill.

Unfortunately, for the past three years, the Conservative government's majority MO has been to automatically refuse any proposal from the opposition meant to improve government bills that fall in the law and order category and that are sometimes introduced by government members through private members' business.

Would my colleague like to share his feelings on this government's almost entirely uncompromising nature? Does he have any faith in the possibility that this government will listen to reason and make sensible changes to the bill, besides what we can propose as a party?

**Mr. Philip Toone:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that very good question.

The government often brags about creating jobs. Unfortunately, those jobs are almost always part time.

When the government imposes mandatory minimum sentences, we know that this will almost certainly end in appeal. I wonder whether the government is trying to create jobs for lawyers. They have enough work and I do not think it is necessary to give them more.

Usually people do not have the means to pay for a lawyer to appeal their case to the Supreme Court. That is very expensive. Unfortunately, the government is intent on doing this and often ends up in court instead of allowing Parliament to do its job, study bills and propose amendments, as the NDP has done many times.

The government rejects the amendments and ends up in court every day, every week and every year. This has to stop. The government should show a little more respect for Canadians. It should introduce worthy bills that are sound and not tainted with minimum sentences.

We should allow judges to hand down sentences, as prescribed by law. We should allow bills to be drafted by members of the House so that they can all take part in the debate. The NDP will certainly take part in the debate. The others do not seem all that interested, even though it is their bill. That is too bad.

Once we are in committee, I hope that the government will understand that mandatory minimums are not appropriate, especially in this case. I look forward to hearing from experts on the matter.

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that the Criminal Code already includes provisions for this kind of offence.

*Government Orders*

Based on his quick assessment, does he think that this bill has anything new to contribute, or is it redundant considering what is already in the Criminal Code?

**Mr. Philip Toone:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from LaSalle—Émard raises an interesting point.

As my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou said, the government is wasting its time reinventing the wheel with its law and order agenda. We have seen this over and over. The mandatory minimums might be the only new thing about this bill.

The idea of service animals helping soldiers, police officers and security personnel is commendable. Raising this matter is commendable. However, the mandatory minimums are such a significant flaw in the bill that they could bring it crashing down.

Why go ahead with such a questionable bill when we could agree on a totally reasonable bill that raises a very important issue, especially after what we have seen in the past few days in Canada, both in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and here in Ottawa?

We have to talk about these issues. It is our duty to help our security personnel and give them all of the tools they need, not bills that will be struck down on appeal.

● (1715)

[*English*]

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first, I am very happy to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-35. It is ironic and timely that we are dealing with a bill that deals with law enforcement animals, military animals, and service animals.

I want to reflect for a very short moment on what took place in the House yesterday. Members have stood today to offer their personal reflections. It was really wonderful to hear the speeches this morning from the leaders of the various political parties, from the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, and to hear the statements in the House. I think it was one of those days that one does not forget.

I have been here 17 years, and I never believed that I would experience a day like we experienced yesterday. Yes, there was a sense of great anxiety and stress about what was taking place, because of course, we did not know what was going on around us, but I think what I am going to remember is the sense of camaraderie and professionalism and people staying calm and staying together. We all have our own personal experience of where we were, who we were with, and what we heard, but listening to pages, to staff, to the security personnel, and our own staff today, in the lobby, and hearing the perspectives of where people are has been really quite remarkable. I have come away with a feeling that, collectively, everyone kept their cool.

It does not sink in until later how really close we came to a terrible disaster, much worse than what happened, and we are grateful for that.

There are things to remember, but we are back at work. Certainly, that is the hallmark of this institution. It is the people's business. We come back, we get on with our work, and we get on to debating bills, because that is what we are elected to do. We do not do that with a sense of hardship; we do it with a sense of mission and a sense of

sincerity about who we are and what we need to do. I am very glad to be back in the House today and to see my colleagues in the House from all sides, and in particular, to be debating the bill.

I heard the debate earlier in the day. I will be making some of the points some of my colleagues have made. I think cruelty to animals, intentional cruelty, is something that just about everybody cannot stomach. It is something that hits us all, and it is something we feel compelled to do something about. Of course, we have the law. We have our criminal justice system to provide protections not just to persons and property but also for animal welfare. That is very important, and I think Canadians support that very strongly.

As we heard in the debate today, the bill comes from a particular incident in 2013, when a police service dog was stabbed to death in the line of duty.

I think that as legislators, it is very important that we examine the bill very carefully, because on its surface, one could say that this is a bill that deserves support. It would specifically introduce a new amendment or create a new offence that would specifically prohibit anyone from killing, wounding, poisoning, or injuring trained animals who work for the police, for persons with disabilities, or for the Canadian Armed Forces.

The principle of the bill is something that is very supportable, and of course, that is what we are debating here today: the bill in principle, at second reading. We, in the NDP, will be supporting the bill to go forward to committee.

● (1720)

Having said that, as the official opposition, our job is to look at the details, go through legislation, get underneath the top layer, and figure out what the bill would really do and maybe, importantly, what the consequences of the bill would be. As we have come to know in the House, and with the current government, it is important to look at the details. How many omnibus bills have we gone through and found terrible surprises in? There have been really awful pieces of legislation that have chucked out other pieces of legislation. The details in a bill become very important.

That is no different for the bill we are debating here today. I would say it is concerning, looking at this bill, because while we have a bill that has good intention, when we look at the details, we can see that it would introduce minimum sentencing and that it does reflect a pattern we have seen from the government over and over again. It is very disturbing.

I have said in the House quite a few times that we should be keeping a list of how the Criminal Code has changed so significantly. We have had all of these bills come through. Some of them have been government bills. Many of them have been private members' bills. They are kind of like these little boutique bills, which one by one pick off this section or that section of the Criminal Code. I guess somebody keeps track of it.

*Government Orders*

I do recall that one of the terrible things that happened in the House through legislation was that the Law Reform Commission was abolished. I am sure the Speaker will recall this, because he would have debated it in the House when it came forward. It was the Law Reform Commission of Canada's job to go through legislation, evaluate it at a long distance, and give us an overview to give us an oversight. It was abolished.

There is a big question here over who keeps track of what all these changes mean cumulatively and what the consequences are. We certainly try to do that as the opposition. We try to keep track of all of these bills, look at all the little holes and changes they create in the Criminal Code, and see what the total effect is. That is a lot of work.

Here is another example of a bill that, on the surface, may look fairly innocent but, in the detail, does actually have consequences. It is a bill that would bring forward minimum sentencing and provisions around serving consecutively.

Some people may ask what the big deal is about that or whether there is any problem with that. The problem is that our judicial system is based on a history and tradition of prosecution, defence, and the role of the judge in terms of being able to use discretion. The judge is able to look at individual cases as being unique. When we create laws that become, in effect, a one-size-fits-all and that are so hyper-prescriptive, we create problems. This is because when we do it to an extreme, the law does not necessarily fit and cannot meet the circumstances of what a particular case might be about. That is why we have judges who can look at the law, apply provisions, and use this word "discretion". I sometimes worry that discretion has become a dirty word in this place, yet it is a hallmark of our judicial system.

I am talking about creeping mandatory minimum sentences. I do not know how many bills we have now had in the House that have had those provisions now put in them. It is not just the current government, by the way. There were mandatory minimums with the previous government as well, and there always was the existence of some mandatory minimums. It is not as if there is never a situation where they should not apply, but now they have become so pervasive in the system that they have almost become the lowest common denominator—slap in a mandatory minimum.

I have this little picture in my head of a group of interns or staffers somewhere, who are combing through the Criminal Code section by section and saying, "Hah, mandatory minimum. We could put one there. We could put one here".

● (1725)

I may be exaggerating a bit, but I sometimes feel that is what is going on, that there is this pattern of seeking out instances where mandatory minimums can be applied, and it is fundamentally changing our judicial system. It is certainly a problem with the bill before us, and I think it is very important that we examine the bill in great detail in committee.

I hope very much that when the bill goes to the justice committee, I presume, government members will not use their majority to then slap on time limits. We are facing that in the public safety committee right now on a bill that has to do with an issue very important to me, which is safe injection sites in this country. It is a complex and important bill, and I find it incredible that at committee there are two

meetings for witnesses and that is the end of it—just two meetings. When we get to amendments, I think the motion says that there will be no more than five minutes or something like that. The censorship and limitation that are now placed on the debate and examination of bills is quite ferocious and, in and of itself, very harmful.

We are not here to hold stuff up. I mean, occasionally that does happen. We might have a bill that we just dig in and say that we will hold it up as long as we can, but by and large we are not here to hold things up. We are here to give proper consideration both in the House at second reading and in committee with amendments and then when it comes back to the House for report stage and third reading.

Therefore, when the bill goes to committee, I hope the committee will be fair and consider that there should not be limits placed on it in terms of the timeline for its consideration, so that the committee can look at some of the questions that I and others have identified today in debate.

I am not on the justice committee, but I am sure others will raise this. It is to look at Department of Justice reports that actually tell us that mandatory minimum sentences have not had a demonstrable deterrent effect. This is something to consider. We go to these extraordinary lengths to change legislation and have it go through the House, the Senate, and the whole process, yet there is really no evidence to show us whether or not it is a deterrent. In fact, the opposite may be true in that the misuse of mandatory minimum sentences, as my colleague said earlier, leads to a downloading to provinces, overcrowding, and skyrocketing costs. These are very real consequences. Provincial budgets are tight. Again, the question is who is tracking that.

I have seen some information come out on the impact of mandatory minimum sentences. I think the Canadian Bar Association has been doing some work on tracking what the impact is, and there has been some work done on a bill that dealt with mandatory minimums for drug crimes. In fact, there was a court case in British Columbia in which a judge refused to go along with the mandatory minimum aspect, and that is now under review.

There are some very serious questions that need to be considered in the bill. This needs to be done in the context of a larger impact in terms of the Criminal Code and our justice system. I think it is very important and incumbent upon us not to ignore that fact. If we just look at these as one-offs, we will never understand the full picture.

What bothers me the most is the strong sense I have that the way the government operates is that for every problem the Conservatives identify, they see the solution as a new law that is harsher.

● (1730)

Some of these questions are complex social questions, and there is no evidence to suggest that a tougher law, a law-and-order approach, is going to actually solve anything. In fact, it might very likely make the situation worse. These things really bother me, and I have certainly seen these changes taking place over a number of years.

However, to come back to the bill itself, we think there are some good aspects in it that should warrant our support. I know that my colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine and my colleague from Parkdale—High Park have put forward initiatives that deal with animal cruelty. I myself have a bill that also deals with this issue. I have presented thousands of petitions in the House about cruelty to cats and dogs in terms of the use of their fur from overseas, and how it should be banned as it has been banned in other countries.

There are numerous initiatives that we have within the NDP to protect against animal cruelty, and certainly we have a huge appreciation for the role that law-enforcement animals, military animals, and service animals play in our society. Again, I come back to yesterday when it was very visible. These are highly trained animals. They are well cared for. They are intelligent. We do not want to see them come into harm's way. We do not want to see vicious attacks on these animals, just as we do not want to see attacks on people. It is not as if we do not care; in fact, we care very much, and the bills we have put forward ourselves in private members' business are evidence of that.

Still, we have to worry about this bill. I have a concern that it is just going to flow right through and we will not have that examination, but we should and we want to ensure that the provisions in Bill C-35 are no different from the penalties and fines already set out in section 445 of the Criminal Code for all animals other than cattle. There is a lot to examine here.

I appreciate the fact that my colleagues have spoken today. We do want to say this for the government. Why is it so important that the government wants to take away sentencing discretion from the courts? Are the Conservatives aware of their own justice department's work about mandatory minimums and whether or not they are a deterrent? Are they aware of how mandatory minimums are undermining the entire legal process? I do not know if there is that knowledge on the government side, whether or not the Conservatives are curious to know the answers to those questions. I can only say that we are, and we think it should be followed up.

In closing, I would like to add my voice along with my colleagues in saying that we certainly support this bill going to committee. It does require further examination. It does need to be looked at in the context of other legislation where mandatory minimums have been brought in. We need to look at the impacts on the provincial system, we need to look at the costs, and we need to ask some tough questions. We need to be intelligent and rational about how we proceed on these kinds of measures. We need to look at evidence, not political doctrine. At the end of the day, that is what is most important. We are here to uphold the public interest. We are here to uphold the notion of merit, evidence, and analysis. Let us remember that when we consider this bill further, and let us hope we can make some sensible decisions.

• (1735)

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Vancouver East, who spoke about the government's strong tendency to amend the Criminal Code. She also spoke intelligently about the long-term consequences of these changes to the Criminal Code. We still do not know all of the repercussions. However, we can look at the impact the Bush

### *Government Orders*

years had on prisons in California, for example. We can look at the facts to see if legislating tougher sentences really deters crime.

She also talked about the monetary costs for Canada and the provinces as well as the social costs of imposing minimum sentences for the sorts of reasons set out in the various bills that we have studied in the House.

[English]

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, the member has reminded me of yet another aspect that we need to consider when looking at the bill, and that is what has taken place in the United States.

I was doing a lot of work on the bill that came forward with mandatory minimum sentences for drug crimes, and this was several years ago when it came forward in its first form. I did a fair amount of research in the U.S. about what was going on. This was before the election of President Obama.

I was so surprised to learn that in individual states in the U.S., there were various commissions being set up to look at the impact of mandatory minimum sentencing. In some states, and I do not remember all of the states, they were actually repealing it, because their prisons were absolutely overflowing, particularly with young African American men and mostly for drug crimes. These are people who are, in effect, sentenced for life, because their opportunity to come back into society and to contribute becomes more and more marginalized and limited.

I did find it really interesting that on the one hand, in the United States, even under the Bush administration, there was a movement beginning to get away from mandatory minimum sentencing, yet here in Canada we were embarking on this course. That seemed quite incredible.

I am glad the member raised this. For Canadians who follow this, they should be quite concerned that we are taking a very regressive path. We often think of ourselves as being so advanced compared to the U.S., whether it is with health care or enforcement issues, yet in some instances we are doing a lot worse, and this would be one of them. We are falling far behind.

I am glad the member raised this point. I think it is very important. Just as they are reviewing their sentencing procedures in the U.S., we should be doing the same in Canada. It is not too late to do that here. I thank the member for raising this point.

• (1740)

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am just going to dig into the issue of mandatory sentences a little further.

Even though we are talking about a very good concept in terms of what the bill is meant to tackle, in terms of the disastrous effects and the fact that previous mandatory sentences in this country have been ruled unconstitutional by our courts, I wonder if my colleague would care to comment on the repeated attempts by the government to introduce mandatory sentencing.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before I go to the hon. member for Vancouver East, I would just remind all hon. members that there is great latitude given in terms of relevance, but that members ought to remember the bill that is before the House and keep their comments consistent with that.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is very relevant that we are looking at the question of mandatory minimum sentences because this is a feature in the bill. The question I heard from my colleague was about why the government continues to do this when it is being challenged and when there is now mounting evidence that there are problems with mandatory minimum sentences. In this case it happens to be six months in prison if a law enforcement animal is killed while helping a police officer enforce the law, so that is the particular provision that is included in the bill.

Unfortunately, I do not know that there is a rationale as to why Conservatives continue to do it. It has become a very political question. It is not a question of evidence. It is not a question of judicial oversight. It is a mindset, a rigid attitude that somehow a mandatory minimum is going to fix the problem and is going to make people feel better. It is a very emotional thing. It is not based on evidence. In fact, as I said, the evidence shows us that it is going the other way.

That is very problematic. I do not think we want a judicial system based on what we think people perceive as tougher. We need to base public policy decisions on evidence, merit and public interest overall. We are facing a very big situation and that is why we are focusing on this aspect in the bill, because it really bothers us that yet again we are seeing this same pattern emerge.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Vancouver East for her very enlightening speech.

At the risk of repeating myself, I want to say that we are studying this bill at second reading in order to send it to committee. That is why we will be supporting it at second reading.

I would like to take advantage of my colleague's extensive experience—she has already been in politics for 17 years—and hear her comments about the committee stage. Unfortunately, during committee work, government members often join forces and use their majority in each committee to reject expert advice and any proposals that come from the opposition parties.

I would like to know how confident she is about the work that will be done on this bill at committee stage.

[*English*]

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, it is a bit of a speculative question but it is certainly worth answering, especially today where in question period the debate in the House was very collegial and we talked about working together. We talked about good will and having respect. I know those are all things that we share, but somehow it gets lost on the way and sometimes it gets horribly lost at committee where real dogfights take place.

It is very disturbing. Committees used to be very collegial. I can remember when committees used to issue quite a lot of unanimous reports because there was a lot of negotiation, give and take, and

they would come out with unanimous reports. I see a member across the way who would remember that. That is very rare today because now there is a kind of shadow from the PMO, a rigidity of how to view a bill at committee and a lot of opposition members feel like we are being shut down at committee. It is unfortunate because some of the good work that MPs can do happens at committee. We want to improve the bill. We want to make constructive suggestions.

The question from my colleague is whether I think that will happen. Well, there is always hope, but unfortunately we have seen a very strong pattern at committee of the government members' votes just kind of washing over and that has been very unfortunate. Because this is a bill that we all do support in a way and it is about the welfare of animals that we all care about, maybe there will be some good will to constructively look at amendments. Let us hope for that. I do not want to be cynical, so let us send the bill to committee and hope that we can come out with a better bill. Would that not be a good thing?

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after yesterday's events, I would first like to say how proud I am to be able to rise in the House and speak freely in this Parliament and in this democracy. I would like to thank all of the security teams that watched over us and protected us.

[*English*]

There are no words that can truly express the gratitude that I think everyone in the House has for the gentlemen who work to protect the House and all Canadians who come to visit it each day. To stand in the House on this day to speak to this bill is of particular pride.

Bill C-35 is a bill that, in its essence, I am very proud to support. I come from a riding that has a large number of animal lovers. I am a cat person. I recently lost my companion animal. When I open my iPad, it is her little face that I see each time. The desire to protect our animal companions and partners is something of import.

Before I forget, Mr. Speaker, I will let you know that I will be splitting my time with the member for Ottawa Centre.

We are only beginning to make the connection between the four-legged companions by our sides in the domestic and leisure sense. We spend a lot of time, energy and money on the care of these companions. Animals and handlers have that very unique relationship where they are working partners, where these animals willingly put their lives on the line to protect their human handlers. Without question, they put themselves between their partners and bullets or knives. It is only right that we pay them the respect they are due for their unwavering sacrifice and dedication. This is where we come together on Bill C-35.



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To be able to say that to harm this animal is to harm myself is extremely important. Unfortunately, where we begin to diverge is in how this is going to be expressed. How are we going to quantify the lives of these animals? Unfortunately, this very noble bill is tainted somewhat by the efforts to yet again introduce mandatory minimum sentences. As I understand our government, we are divided into three spheres: the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary. There are codes in place that create checks and balances so that no one of these sectors, so to speak, can overpower the other.

• (1750)

With the introduction of minimum mandatory sentences, we run into a situation where we invade the jurisdiction of the judiciary. We take away the ability for our judges, who we entrust with their wisdom and knowledge of law, and the intricacies of human nature and human actions, to justly administer the law.

We call it the justice system for a reason. It is not the vengeance system. It is not the vindictive system. It is the justice system. To mete out justice, one must have the ability to take all things into consideration. Justice may be blind, but it is not deaf and dumb. The ability for a judge to take all the evidence into consideration is something that we protect. It is our job to ensure it is done in a way that speaks to our society.

Unfortunately, yet again, the government introduces minimum mandatory sentences, basically using a sledgehammer to kill a gnat. The importance of being able to create a full picture of what a person has done, what crime a person has committed, is the hallmark of our justice system. The sledgehammer analogy that I used is referring to the fact that for some reason the government seems to shy away from the details, the minutia, of the creation of legislation. They say, “Let us put a bill together. Let us make it wrong to do this thing and let us throw them in prison forever”.

That is not our job. Our job as legislators, and the reason we have debates, is to take a concept, an idea, a bill and go through that bill with a fine tooth comb to ensure that when we come to conclusion, each and every detail results in a bill that serves the people of Canada; that it protects the interests of those we are trying to protect and the rights of those who might be falsely accused; and allows for the judgment, from our judges, to take extenuating circumstances, to take all the information that is presented to them, into consideration in handing out a just sentence. The details of Bill C-35 are virtually absent.

We definitely empathize with the origin of the bill. It is nicknamed Quanto's Law. We understand where it comes from and we agree wholeheartedly that our companion animals, those who serve the people who protect us, help find contraband materials at our borders, help find mines in war zones, and help find lost souls in avalanches, should be protected. However, are they really going to be protected with mandatory minimum sentences?

• (1755)

My colleague spoke to the effect of mandatory minimum sentences. She mentioned that we have no real proof that mandatory minimum sentences work.

In this spirit of camaraderie that was expressed today, I hope we can take this noble bill to committee, to look at how we can give

judges the latitude to impose the proper punishments on individuals who harm our friends without making it something which is basically killing a gnat with a sledgehammer.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and riding neighbour for his speech.

He also spoke about yesterday's events, as well as what companion animals do for people. These animals can include cats, which he loves. For the constituents we represent, especially seniors, these companions are important.

I would also like the member to talk more about the importance of pets. As we have heard, they can help with security, but they can also help with general well-being. Pets are good for our psychological well-being, which is an important aspect of the role these animals play.

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Our relationship with animals is truly special and unique. It takes time for service animals to be trained and for a relationship to develop. It is truly special. That is why we need to treat these animals as partners and friends.

• (1800)

[*English*]

They deserve the protections this bill would offer. What I am putting out there is that mandatory minimums is not the way to go. We should give judges the opportunity and range to respond in kind to whatever threat is posed to our animal friends.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member spoke a lot about mandatory minimums, so I would like to hear his comments. After the speeches we have heard, it is clear that this issue is very important to us with this bill.

During my speech I said that this would take powers away from judges—no one disagrees there—and would put those powers in the hands of prosecutors, but that it was also a question of governance. This bill would remove power from the legislative branch and give it to the executive branch. We know that prosecutors work under the jurisdiction of various justice departments and ministers at the provincial and federal levels. It is not simply a question of effectiveness or even cost. It is also a question of a change in governance.

I would like to hear what my colleague thinks about that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, the separation of the executive, the judicial and the legislative is something that is fundamental to our system of governance. The introduction of mandatory minimum sentences is dangerous to those divisions because it takes away the flexibility and wisdom of the judiciary, and places the balance in the hands of both the executive and legislative branches wherein the total governance of our nation could become imbalanced.

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**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I too wish to speak in support of Bill C-35, which we are debating today.

I want to express my gratitude to the guards, the first responders, who basically saved our lives yesterday. They went through a lot yesterday and we cannot thank them enough. Let me be frank. On a daily basis in this place and in this precinct, we take them for granted. Our hearts are with them not only because of what they did for us yesterday but for what they do for us on a daily basis.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the RCMP and to the Ottawa police force. What happened yesterday is fresh in our memory. As this is my first opportunity to rise in the House since the horrific events of yesterday, I want to take this opportunity to thank them. I am grateful for their help. They did their job. If they had not done their job, we might not be in this place today. We should never take that for granted.

I want to thank all of them for not only what they have done for us in the past but particularly for what they did yesterday and will continue to do in the future.

We understand the context of Bill C-35. This legislation is in memory of an Edmonton police service dog named Quanto. I recall many times in this place bills that have been attributed to events or to individuals, but this legislation is quite unique. People who are not aware of the context of this legislation would not really appreciate the fact that we are talking about protecting animals and the importance of what they do.

Some people may be scratching their heads because we are having a debate about dogs in the Parliament of Canada. It would appear to be strange.

However, the context of this legislation is important because of the horrific violence that took place involving this police service dog. It ups our game in looking at protecting those who serve and those who are first responders. That is a good thing and something we should celebrate. Again, I think of the events of yesterday. Now more than ever we can appreciate every device used to protect people.

This legislation is inspired by the case of the Edmonton police service dog named Quanto. It was a horrific event. The dog was stabbed to death during its pursuit of a fleeing suspect. The case really grabbed people's attention in October 2013 and pushed people to act. The Deputy Speaker and one of my colleagues had a private member's bill on this same issue.

We must look at the whole context of first responders. We must look not only at service dogs and what they do in the case of police services but also rescue dogs and what they do to help people who are stranded. Many of my colleagues have given us their stories. This past Fall there were a couple of stories involving kids who had walked away from their homes. Rescue dogs found those kids and they were returned to their homes safely. I was inspired by those stories.

It is important that we look at the whole issue of first responders and that is what this legislation does. Obviously, first responders are supported by technology, but they are also supported with backup, like logistics and communications. We saw that yesterday.

● (1805)

However, to have dogs that are highly trained and supportive gives first responders confidence that they will be supported.

If people do not understand the kind of work our police services and our military do, they might not appreciate the importance of service animals. Service animals have a very long tradition, a history that is not particularly new. What is new is that we are recognizing that their importance merits putting amendments into the Criminal Code to make sure it is recognized.

To branch out a bit beyond police service dogs, having travelled a bit in my capacity as foreign affairs spokesperson, I know that overseas our military uses service dogs to accompany soldiers. Dogs were trained in Afghanistan to help in terms of IEDs, explosives, and munitions. Through their work they provide safety for our military abroad and for civilians who might be affected by conflict. These dogs are there to sniff out explosives so that the explosives can be deactivated and will not be used to kill people. These dogs provide an extraordinarily important service.

We have to understand rescue animals in that context. Particularly with dogs, which I know best, this approach is important.

We also have to understand the importance of these animals in terms of what they are able to provide. It is not just that they are trained to aid and abet the work of first responders, police, military, et cetera; they also provide important support for those people, who are working in highly stressful situations.

We have come to learn a lot about the importance of animals in the field of mental health and the effect dogs can have. I think of what is happening with veterans, for instance. A lot of work being done with veterans uses animals, particularly dogs, to help them. I have seen it with seniors as well. I have seen it with kids with autism, et cetera. It is important to understand this capability, and it is really smart to provide this service to people, because it works.

We have a dog in our home, Wesley. He was a rescue dog from Iqaluit in Nunavut. He is a little West Highland Terrier and a mix of some other breeds—a Heinz 57, if you will, and I know the kind of support he provides our family. My two teenage boys might not be able to talk to me about everything, but certainly they can confide in Wesley. We know that really does help.

We see this as an important good, both for first responders in making sure people are safe as well as in providing that personal support, but there are times when the dogs are put in harm's way or in perilous situations, such as in the example from last October, so it makes sense to put this reform into the Criminal Code. We acknowledge the government's promises in the Speech from the Throne and we look for its commitments on some of the other issues we noted in the Speech from the Throne coming forward as well in regulation legislation.

*Private Members' Business*

It is important to note what my colleagues have noted when we are talking about Criminal Code changes. When I was first elected, I recall my colleague from Windsor, the Deputy Speaker, noting the government's agenda on justice matters and saying that it would be really smart to have an overview of the Criminal Code. However, one of the things we should stay away from is putting mandatory minimums on all legislation, which seems to be a dominant response of the Conservative government. The Criminal Code was passed by Parliament and it is important that we get it right, but as my colleague from Montreal stated, the judiciary must have some leeway—some—to interpret and to sentence appropriately after having had a full hearing of evidence provided on a case.

That point is very important when it comes to this piece of legislation and others, simply because when a mandatory minimum law was put in place in the past, judges felt it restricted their ability to sentence in a sensible way. This meant that as a result of the mandatory minimum declaration, justice sometimes could not be done.

● (1810)

That is why, on this side, we believe that a mandatory minimum approach should be restricted to very few cases. Our colleague from Windsor has taught law and understands these issues. I think that the one case for which we have evidence that it might work was in the case of drunk driving, but other than that, we have not seen evidence that it works.

We believe that this is a good initiative. We think that we should go forward, take it to committee, and improve it. We should make sure that the government understands that, as with other justice issues and bills, it should resist the temptation to have mandatory minimums.

On this day, let me say that there is a lot of agreement on the issue. There is a lot of support, and the importance of the issue is recognized. That is a good thing. Let us work together to improve the bill and make sure it is the best bill that we can provide.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It being 6:14 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION REGULATIONS

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC)** moved:

That the House call on the government to take action to prevent forced marriages and any kind of non-consensual sponsorship in the immigration system by amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations so as to: (a) ban the use of proxy, telephone, and fax marriages as a means to spousal sponsorship; (b) disallow explicitly, in section 5, the use of proxy, telephone and fax marriages for the purpose of immigration; and (c) set out administrative measures that communicate clearly to visa officers how to detect a proxy, telephone or fax marriage.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to introduce my motion, which pertains to telephone, fax, Internet or

proxy marriages; specifically, as they relate to immigration to Canada.

The issue is both timely, I would say urgent, in fact, as well as deeply troubling. My motion is related to forced marriages, in that the sad truth is that these practices can be used to force individuals, usually women and girls, into non-consensual marriages.

Allow me to elaborate on the issue that I am bringing forward today.

A marriage by proxy is one where one or even both participants are not present at the ceremony and are represented by another person. Sometimes, these marriages are conducted via telephone, the Internet, or even by fax. Some visa offices around the world encounter marriages by proxy on a regular basis, as it is a cultural practice in some parts of the world. Rest assured, such marriages are not legally recognized when performed in Canada.

They are currently recognized by Canadian immigration law, however, when conducted outside of Canada. I am not telling members that all of these arrangements are invalid. Simply put, my motion asks the government to make the necessary regulation changes to disallow telephone, fax, Internet or proxy marriages for the purpose of immigration, and in particular, spousal sponsorship.

I am sure we all would agree it is essential to protect Canadians, as well as those who dream of a new life in Canada. That is why we must do whatever we can to strengthen the protection of vulnerable women in Canada and to support the rights of immigrant and newcomer women in the strongest possible way. The motion we are debating today would provide that strong protection.

Now, let me be clear. The motion is not an indictment of cultural practices related to arranged marriages. An arranged marriage is a marriage in which families take a leading role, but both parties have the free will to accept or decline the arrangement. What we are debating today is the issue of forced marriages, whereby one or more parties to the marriage have not given their consent.

However, the focus of the motion is the increasing concern that some marriages by telephone, fax, Internet or proxy can make it easier for someone to be forced into a marriage to which they do not consent. Indeed, as I have stated, there have been reports of spousal sponsorship cases that were, in fact, cases of forced marriages facilitated by proxy. The effects on the victims are devastating and far-reaching as it also impacts children and communities.

Unfortunately, violence against women and girls continues to affect tens of thousands each year and harmful cultural practices, such as forced marriage, still exist as a reality for some women and girls. Men and boys can also be victims, but women and girls are particularly vulnerable. As a member of the status of women committee, these issues of violence against women and girls are top of mind for me.

*Private Members' Business*

However, forced marriages also have an impact upon the integrity of our immigration system, which is the focus of the regulation change required to solve this problem. I can think of at least two possible scenarios that illustrate this point.

The first involves a Canadian or a permanent resident being forced to marry a foreign national and then being compelled to bring that person and their dependants to Canada through family sponsorship. For example, let us say a young woman is pressured by her family, or others, to marry a foreign national so that her sponsored spouse can then come to Canada and bring with him any dependants.

The second is the possible situation of a Canadian or a permanent resident forcing a foreign national into marriage and then compelling that person to come to Canada as their sponsored spouse. In this scenario, a woman abroad could be forced against her will to marry a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident and then be compelled to come to Canada as a sponsored spouse.

In both of these situations, the marriage can take place by proxy, telephone, fax or the Internet and then can be used as a basis upon which to apply to immigrate to Canada. This is not how Canada's spousal sponsorship is intended to work, nor should it be allowed in other immigration streams that support keeping families together through the migration process. These scenarios not only underscore our responsibility as legislators to ensure that we uphold and strengthen the protections for vulnerable women, they also bring home our responsibility to protect our immigration system from abuse.

It is time to close this loophole.

● (1815)

Central to our country's success, prosperity, and social harmony is the fact that we are united as Canadian citizens not by shared ancestry but by a pledge of mutual responsibility and a shared commitment to values and traditions rooted in our history. As the daughter of immigrants myself, and therefore as a first-generation Canadian, these values are central to my personal beliefs, and I will work to protect them as a Canadian and as a parliamentarian. This includes ensuring that everyone who interacts with our immigration system is treated fairly and that we do everything we can to help people successfully integrate as citizens of our country, regardless of their country of origin, their ethnic heritage, their economic circumstance, or their gender.

While not all telephone, fax, Internet, or proxy marriages are forced, it is clear from the information received by visa officers in Canada's regional offices that some most certainly are. It is not an exaggeration to characterize forced marriage as a form of family violence. It is an extremely harmful practice that must not be tolerated.

To protect the integrity of our immigration system and to protect those who might be victimized by harmful practices, the government has made it much harder for people convicted of crimes that result in bodily harm against members of their families, or other particularly violent offences, to sponsor any family-class member to come to Canada. These are the kinds of actions the Government of Canada has taken recently to address family violence in the context of immigration.

As members can see, family violence is not tolerated in Canada under any circumstance, and individuals who do not respect Canadian law and commit serious crimes should not benefit from the privilege of sponsorship.

Millions of girls and women continue to be brutalized by violence, including through the inhumane practice of early and forced marriage. Sometimes these are conducted by telephone, fax, Internet, or proxy. As promised in last year's Speech from the Throne, this government will take steps to ensure that it does not occur on Canadian soil.

Last, I want to recommend to the government one specific exemption to any new regulation that would be implemented. That is for members of the Canadian Armed Forces in active military service. These dedicated brave men and women should be exempted from any new regulations disallowing telephone, fax, Internet, or proxy marriages for the purposes of immigration.

I want to let members know that telephone, fax, Internet, and proxy marriages do facilitate non-bona fide marriages and may facilitate forced marriages as well. The regulation change my motion asks of government would protect women, girls, and vulnerable people as well as protect Canada's immigration system from abuse. I ask that all members of this House support this fair, reasonable, and common-sense motion.

● (1820)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, is the member opposite aware of any province that legally recognizes proxy marriages in Canada?

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, these marriages by proxy, Internet, and fax are not currently allowable in any province in Canada. Perhaps the member may be concerned that this might be the case, so I want to reassure him that it is not. My bill focuses exclusively on disallowing these marriages that have taken place elsewhere, where they are allowed, for the purposes of immigration. The member can rest assured that these do not occur in Canada and are not registered in any province in Canada.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering how the member could address the concerns that civil society has raised that, in fact, this piece of legislation, while it claims to deal with forced marriage, actually creates obstacles to a legitimate couple's ability to achieve family reunification through the immigration system.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Speaker, the piece the member opposite is perhaps not fully understanding is that many of these marriages, it has been shown, are in fact not valid, not legitimate, and are conducted simply for the purpose of immigration. It is an abuse of our immigration system and our generous spousal sponsorship provisions.

I would say to the member that as these are not acceptable in Canada, for that reason alone they should not be acceptable as a basis upon which to allow those married in this fashion to immigrate to Canada.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1825)

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to first congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for Mississauga South, on her initiative in bringing this motion forward and for her excellent speech here today.

Can the hon. member comment on how her motion supports our government's commitment to end early and forced marriage? As well, does the member have a sense of whether the opposition parties are supporting her motion?

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Speaker, this motion is definitely in line with a number of other initiatives the government has taken to reduce the incidence of violence against women. In particular, we have initiated programs to protect temporary foreign workers, for example, who have been abused or refugees who have been found to have been abused by their new spouses. We are trying very hard to make sure that vulnerable women and girls are not taken advantage of in this way.

When the member mentioned the opposition, it brought to mind something the member for Papineau said before he was the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. That was that words like “barbaric” should not be used to describe honour killings, forced marriages, or female genital mutilation, because those words are unnecessarily jarring and pejorative.

I would disagree strongly with that, as I think many members of this House would, as would the government. Our actions speak for themselves.

This motion closes a loophole in the immigration system for abuse and for those who wish to propagate what I would say are indeed barbaric practices.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House to express our opposition to the motion on behalf of the official opposition.

Violence against immigrant and refugee women in Canada is a real problem with systemic roots. Immigrant and refugee women are at higher risk, and the Conservative government is empowered to make critical changes. Sadly, this motion is not one.

Sponsorship laws must be changed so that women who experience domestic violence can safely leave their marriages without fear of deportation. Humanitarian and compassionate grounds for staying refugee deportations must include the threat of violence against women. Foreign embassies and consular officials must be trained to deal with instances of domestic violence and forced marriage. Legal aid must be increased to support divorce and custody cases that are brought forth by immigrant women. Culturally sensitive shelters, medical aid, police services, and counselling services must be increased, funded, and sustained. All this I have heard directly from women and service providers across the country as I have consulted for Motion No. 444, a motion to create a national action plan to end violence against women. As well, the issue of forced marriage has been raised in these consultations by those who are experts on the subject.

The motion before us is particularly insidious, because it seeks to exploit the reality of forced marriage, which is violence against

women, to mask something that, according to all experts, has nothing to do with it. The premise of the motion is entirely speculative, and no credible data exists to substantiate it. The language of violence against women is once again being used carelessly for political gain.

In my years on Parliament Hill, I have rarely come across a motion that is so misleading on the nature of a problem and that relates to such a serious issue as violence against women. That is why New Democrats will be voting against the motion, and I urge the government member to withdraw it and truly deal with the root issue, which is the violence and inequality women face.

My colleague, the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, explained to me that while the study of immigrant and refugee women was taking place in the standing committee, Conservative members of Parliament were inexplicably insisting that proxy marriage was a problem, while expert witnesses were testifying that in fact it was not. In fact, what we see in this motion is a veiled attempt to further hinder family reunification in Canada.

Proxy marriage is a legal marriage that takes place long distance over the telephone or even by Skype. Forced marriage is a form of domestic violence and a global human rights issue. It takes place without consent, has nothing to do with immigration, and is already classified as a crime in Canada and in most countries around the world.

The fact is, forced marriage is the subject of several myths, and the rhetoric I have heard to justify this motion only exacerbates those myths.

The South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, SALCO, has been working since 2005 to create empirical data and research on the subject of forced marriage, and in its report published in 2013, it was able to dispel those myths.

Number one is that forced marriage is not an immigration issue. The report said that forced marriage “impacts Canadian citizens. It is not restricted to a particular geographic area or culture”.

Number two is that forced marriage is not a thing of the past. It “is very much an issue that continues to affect Canadians today”.

Number three is that forced marriage happens only in certain cultures. “The survey results reveal that forced marriage takes place across cultures and religions”.

Deepa Mattoo from SALCO said that this motion confirms that the current government lacks the tools for the proper identification and understanding of forced marriages. There has been no indication from the research done by the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario and the Department of Justice that forced marriage victims face victims face proxy marriages. She said that the proposed motion suggests once again that our lawmakers and government are focusing on potential fraud elements in spousal sponsorship situations but that the issue of forced marriages continues to be ignored and sidetracked.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1830)

Inventing a link between spousal sponsorship, immigration policy, and an egregious form of violence against women is not only irresponsible and fallacious, but it is also dangerous, as it fans the flames of the exact xenophobia and racism that makes the lives of immigrant women so vulnerable. I am gravely concerned that South Asian communities are targeted and persecuted by these myths in particular. Arranged marriages exist in South Asian communities as they do in many cultures, but these marriages are often consensual and loving and must not be confused with forced marriage or immigration fraud.

The immigration and refugee protection regulations already investigate sponsorship marriages for genuineness, and we have heard from lawyers, as well as community leaders, that South Asian marriages are targeted unduly for these investigations. This motion would only heighten those unjustified suspicions and create unnecessary delays in reuniting family members across borders.

We must diligently respect the rights of the South Asian community, as with all minority communities in our multicultural landscape. Chantal Desloges, another experienced immigration lawyer who strongly disagrees with this motion, said that marriage sponsorships for Pakistani couples now take close to three years for processing. As a result of this, due to cultural reasons, many couples choose to do an inexpensive and fast proxy marriage in order to get the sponsorship filed, then do a big public wedding once the couple is able to move to Canada together.

Chantal also speaks to the needs of another highly targeted community when she asks what is to be done about the situation of refugees—for example, Afghans or Syrians—where it is physically impossible for the intended spouses to marry in person.

In my role as critic for the status of women and as an elected representative, I am consistently in contact with women who are the victims of violence. I have dedicated a large part of my mandate to the eradication of this violence, and I am taken aback by how callously this motion pretends to help the victims of violence while, in fact, it is only an attempt to further close down our immigration regulations and will be used to further stigmatize members of ethnic groups that are already unduly scrutinized.

We must strive to create and implement an agenda that seeks to eradicate violence against women and, very importantly, seeks to achieve the equality all women deserve.

• (1835)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I wish to note as many members today have the deep gratitude we have in particular for the folks we affectionately call “the blue shirts”, the parliamentary precinct security guards with whom I spent most of the day yesterday in their lunchroom under lockdown. They were professional, courteous and in good spirits in very trying times and put themselves in harm's way with the bravery that all of us are indebted to and I would like to thank them and pay my respects personally from the floor of the House.

Our thoughts are also of course with the six-year-old boy whose father has been lost. The flags are at half-mast across the country in

respect, but our hearts are held high and our love for that young child and our support for him remain as high as possible and stream straight into the night tonight as we remember a soldier who lost his life in the line of duty.

I now turn my attention to the motion in front of us. It is a confusing motion. It is a piece of legislation that comes forward with a name and intent to go in one direction, but it heads off completely in the opposite direction. It focuses its language around the issue of trying to prevent proxy marriages, but it really seeks to try to address the issue of forced marriages. It is this confusion that makes it a difficult motion to debate because we are not really sure what the intent of this private member's motion is. It would be much clearer if the government would simply bring forward legislation that changes our immigration act and changes our Criminal Code in a way that was much clearer, much more direct in its intent, but also sought to ban a practice that was not already illegal.

My question for the motion's sponsor indicates that proxy marriages in many provinces, in fact all provinces, are not recognized. Therefore, we are seeking to make illegal something that is already illegal and redundancy is at the heart of where our concern about this motion lies.

We understand and support moves to prevent forced marriages and to prevent forced marriages from being the pretext for immigration or any other legal follow-up in this country. We understand that and we are in total support of the concerns that have been raised by all members of the House in speaking to this issue about how seriously a forced marriage violates the principles of what we see as both a spiritual and a legal arrangement that deserves much greater respect.

We note that forced marriages have a disproportionate impact on young women, on women who have been subjected to violence. The evidence presented by the South Asian Legal Clinic is very clear on this. This is a concern that the House should be concerned with and the Canadian government and Canadian law should deal with and in fact does.

The issue of proxy marriages is what the motion seeks to sculpt and limit as a legal reality, and we have concerns there. Many members may know that I was a city councillor and as a city councillor one becomes a public notary while holding the office. I remember getting instructions from our city clerk's department but also in conversation with legal colleagues about the absolute importance to be present to witness all the documents. One is part of the legal process and must bear witness to the person signing and presenting the identification.

The same is true for marriage. It is very easy to understand it and see it as simply a spiritual or religious exercise, the joining of two families as an emotional or romantic conclusion to a courtship. It is also though fundamentally at its core a legal arrangement. When that legal arrangement is extended and blended with technology, problems start to arise, in particular, if forced marriage is involved. However, when we extend or use technology to record or codify or make legal that union, there are concerns that are raised. The idea of a marriage by fax is one of those areas where we share a concern, but we do not think this is going to deal with the pretext of the motion, which is about preventing forced marriages.

*Private Members' Business*

● (1840)

A fake marriage, a bad marriage, a marriage made out of convenience to do an end run or circumvent the laws of the country are a serious matter and we share those serious concerns. None of us want to see marriage or any legal arrangement used to circumvent laws. That is not appropriate.

This is an issue where we must also accommodate modern realities, where borders change quickly, where family situations and a profoundly dysfunctional immigration system in this country prevents people from being next to each other even when they are properly and legally married. It is a concern that we all share.

I will give members an example. Without naming names, there was a case that came into my constituency office of a Canadian citizen, a professor with a Ph.D., who was working overseas in one of the Commonwealth countries and married a colleague, another recipient of a Ph.D., another person with highly-prized skills. When she came back to Toronto to teach, her partner was told that he could wait two years before rejoining her or could come here for two years and not travel or work. That is absurd. This was a legal marriage that was not forced or done by proxy and nonetheless was not honoured here.

As I listened to some of the remarks that were being made here, I noted that the members opposite denigrate people with real credentials from somewhere else with great ease. No wonder foreign-trained professionals have such a difficult time getting recognition of their citizenship, their intelligence and their capacity in this country when people with degrees from Ivy League universities are joked at for having gone abroad to receive them. Shame on the members opposite. Shame.

**Mr. David Anderson:** You lecture us. You did not do anything for 13 years.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. Could members listen to their colleague who has the floor. If members are not able to do so, perhaps they can remove themselves from the chamber, if that is what it takes.

The hon. member for Trinity—Spadina.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** We are speaking about whether or not legal arrangements overseas are recognized here in this country. As I said, when a Rhodes scholar goes off to Oxford and his or her credentials are mocked, when somebody teaches at Harvard and his or her credentials are mocked, it is no wonder that people who come to this country with credentials from elsewhere, whether they are marriage certificates or university degrees, feel so alienated when they arrive in this country and have to take extreme measures to get their legal reality recognized. It is a shame.

Those of us whose parents come from other countries or have family members who were trained in other countries are appalled when the laws of this country are not applied evenly to all Canadian citizens and people are mocked for their international experience or the documents and information they bring to this country.

I would ask the members opposite to bring forward motions that are clear, that are named appropriately and that address the issue they are trying to bring resolution to because when they confuse us or mock us, they do not do a service to this House.

● (1845)

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in this very important debate today. As my honourable colleagues know, women in Canada have been building this great nation of ours through their contributions to every facet of Canadian life and history. One of Canada's most well-known feminists, Nellie McClung, once said that "People must know the past to understand the present and to face the future".

Indeed, whether they were born here or arrived as newcomers to Canada, our history is full of stories of strong, outstanding women who were a part of the foundation of our country's success. Inspiring and driven women start businesses, they create jobs and contribute brilliant ideas in fields like the arts, science, technology, medicine, and so much more.

Canada is a country that respects the equality of opportunity for all individuals, no matter their gender, nationality or religious beliefs. As I look around the House today, I am proud to see that our Parliament now has a record number of women representing the interests of their communities and their nation.

Our government is committed to breaking down barriers and supporting all women on their journey to becoming leaders. Of course, this also includes providing immigrant and newcomer women with all the tools they need to succeed and flourish in Canada. That is why our immigrant settlement services are flexible and designed to meet the diverse needs of newcomers, including women who may be facing multiple barriers such as low literacy skills, lack of child care help and limited transportation. Once in Canada, women also have access to a range of employment-related supports that help them build their skills to enter the workforce and advance their careers. Our government is focused on supporting the rights of immigrant and newcomer women in the strongest possible way.

Unfortunately, violence against women and girls continues to affect tens of thousands of Canadians each year and barbaric cultural practices such as forced marriages are still a reality for some women and girls. Men and boys can also be victims, but women and girls are especially vulnerable. That is why we must always do whatever we can to protect victims of these barbaric cultural practices. The motion we are debating today provides another tool to protect these victims and allow them to live fulfilling lives in their new home, Canada.

First, let us be clear about what we are debating today, which is the issue of forced marriages. In a forced marriage, one or more parties to the marriage have not given their consent. Conversely, an arranged marriage is a marriage in which families take a leading role, but both parties have the free will to accept or decline the arrangement.

*Private Members' Business*

The motion would not affect these consensual marriages. What the motion proposes is to disallow marriages by proxy, as well as those performed via fax, telephone and Internet. For my honourable colleagues who are unfamiliar with the term, a marriage by proxy is where one, or even both participants, are not present at the ceremony and are represented by a third party. Sometimes these marriages are conducted via telephone, the Internet, or even by fax. Such marriages are not legally recognized when performed in any Canadian province or territory. However, they are currently recognized by Canadian immigration law when conducted outside of Canada.

When our government takes action to implement this motion, we would ensure that marriages by proxy, telephone, fax or Internet would still be recognized for members of the Canadian Armed Forces in active military service. We want to ensure that those in active military service to Canada could still get married if they are deployed for extended periods of time.

It is important to note that immigration applicants who decide to marry by proxy would have options. Couples could choose to remarry in person at a ceremony that meets a specific requirement, or they could apply as common-law or conjugal partners.

I want to reiterate that marriages by proxy, fax, telephone or Internet are not permitted in Canada in any province or territory.

● (1850)

Consideration of proxy marriages on humanitarian and compassionate grounds would also be available. However, the main focus of this motion is the increasing concern that some marriages by proxy, telephone, fax, or Internet originate as forced marriage. These are, for the most part, people who are not attending their own wedding ceremonies. Another individual is giving consent on their behalf by proxy. It is more difficult to give one's consent to marriage when one is not in the same room as the new bride or groom, which is what happens in a proxy, fax, telephone, or Internet marriage.

Indeed, there have been reports from our missions around the world of spousal sponsorship cases that were in fact cases of forced marriage facilitated by proxy. The unfortunate reality is that these practices can be used to force individuals into non-consensual marriages. It is time to close this loophole once and for all.

We are united as Canadian citizens not only by our shared ancestry but by a pledge of mutual responsibility and a commitment to the values and traditions rooted in our history. It is a fundamental Canadian value to ensure that each and every Canadian has a fair shot at a full and happy life and an equal chance at success and integration. This includes ensuring that everyone who interacts with our immigration system is treated fairly and that we are doing everything we can to help them successfully integrate as citizens of our country, regardless of their country of origin, their ethnic heritage, their economic circumstance, or their gender.

Our Conservative government has enacted many measures to protect the integrity of our immigration system and to prevent those at risk from being victimized by harmful practices. For example, our government has made it much harder for people convicted of violent crimes against family members or other particularly violent offences to sponsor any family class member to come to Canada. Family violence is not tolerated in Canada under any circumstance, and

individuals who do not respect Canadian law and commit a serious crime should not benefit from the privilege of sponsorship.

Our Conservative government has also brought in new measures in recent years to deter foreign nationals from entering into marriages of convenience to gain permanent resident status in Canada. This includes a two-year conditional permanent resident status for certain sponsored spouses. Of course, our government has also introduced an exemption to the conditional status measures in instances where there is evidence of any abuse of a physical, sexual, psychological, or financial nature.

Our Conservative government has taken many steps to protect vulnerable immigrant and newcomer women.

As the motion before us states, it is time for our government to take action. Once again, we have a responsibility as legislators to ensure that we uphold and strengthen the protection of victimized women. I believe that strong women are the foundation of a strong and prosperous nation, our Canada.

Let us work toward making the next generation of Canadian girls and women the most fearless and accomplished generation yet. The Conservative government is proud to support Motion No. 505, and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to it.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Djauouda Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank all the security personnel for their bravery and professionalism in dealing with the disturbing events that took place yesterday in the House of Commons. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I am pleased to take part in the debate on a subject as important as Motion No. 505. In my speech, I will take the time to shed some light on this sensitive issue, while the government, the majority, is doing everything it can to sow confusion.

I would like to remind hon. members of the words of the illustrious philosopher Albert Camus, which should be a guiding principle when it comes to policy development. He said, "to call things by incorrect names is to add to the world's misery".

That pretty much sums up the Conservative immigration and refugee protection policy: adding confusion to misery and suspicion to distress.

This text, which confuses forced marriage, arranged marriage and marriage by proxy, is another blatant example.

I would like to remind hon. members of several basic concepts in order to put an end to the serious confusion caused by the majority and, of course, the government. A forced marriage is a horrendous practice that I strongly object to. A forced marriage is a marital union in which one or both of the parties is married against his or her will. This practice goes against the humanist values set out in article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which we stand up for here.



In the case of an arranged marriage, the families agree to plan the marriage and the bride and groom consent. That is also the case for marriage by proxy. Marriage by proxy allows two people who are separated by circumstance, often in a country at war, to voluntarily enter into a marriage.

I am appalled that the Conservatives continually mixed up these three concepts in their remarks.

As the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration said, forced marriages are only very rarely entered into by proxy.

If the government really intends to take measures to prevent forced marriages in Canada, why is it attacking marriage by proxy? I do not understand it. It once again falls to us to explain that this text will be useless for four main reasons.

First of all, the quantitative scope of this phenomenon is extremely limited. I will quote the director general of immigration:

Forced marriages are something very difficult to quantify. The known incidence of forced marriages in the immigration system is quite small, and the instances tend to be anecdotal.

Second, this text is useless because it establishes a correlation between forced marriage and marriage by proxy that does not exist. Many researchers and workers on the ground told us this.

• (1855)

Ms. Korteweg of the sociology department of the University of Toronto told the committee that the problems of forced marriage cannot be addressed through this motion. Forced marriages are not caused by marriage by proxy.

I would also add that the proposed measures are not based on any facts or statistics. There is nothing to indicate any link between forced marriage and marriage by proxy. This text is bad because it bans something that is already prohibited. Indeed, forced marriages are already prohibited in Canada, and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations already compel Citizenship and Immigration to conduct thorough investigations into spousal sponsorship to verify the sincerity of marriages.

Not only is this text useless, it is actually harmful, which is much more serious. It is harmful in several ways. First of all, the Conservatives are using the victims of forced marriage as a pretext for further limiting spousal sponsorships, despite all the witnesses heard in committee.

This text also creates confusion and confuses facts that have nothing to do with denouncing forced marriage. In doing so, it lays the blame on customs and cultural communities that do not practice forced marriage, for the simple reason that their traditions are different than ours.

This text is problematic because once again it amends the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations. I must point out that this government has amended these regulations roughly every three months since 2008.

The best way to deal with forced marriages in Canada is to give CIC officers the necessary resources to conduct investigations. These are lengthy and costly investigations that require patience, time and

effort. There is no guarantee that they will protect against every case of fraud, but every case of fraud will go undetected without them. How are these officers supposed to work with the requisite equanimity when the government cuts budgets at every turn and changes the regulations every three months?

We are paying the price for this government's ideological cuts since the backlog in processing sponsorship claims has skyrocketed in the past few years. In some cases people are waiting 33 months. That is unacceptable.

It would be naive to suggest that this government made mistakes in its approach to its immigration policy. It is well aware of the catastrophic results of its constant tinkering, but it does not care. It prefers to engage in its penchant for making policy based on back-page stories and then denounce the misfortunes born of its own mismanagement.

We, the members of the NDP, are responsible people. We are getting ready to form the first social democratic government in Canada, and that is why we have clear, concrete proposals on this issue.

Before I list those proposals, I wish to remind the House that we firmly believe that a marriage must be entered into with the free and full consent of both parties. It is unacceptable that a practice as barbaric as forced marriage could take place in a country like Canada.

That is why the NDP is calling on the government to invest the material and human resources needed to hear spousal sponsorship applications under the right conditions. We are also formulating three proposals to effectively strengthen protection for women in our immigration system.

The government should start by acknowledging that violence against women transcends forced marriage. It is critical to implement a procedure that would inform potential partners of their legal rights before they arrive in Canada—when they go to the Canadian consulate to ask for their immigration documents, for example.

*Private Members' Business*

●(1900)

We believe that the concept of conditional permanent residence should be eliminated for sponsored spouses. Regardless of the intention behind this measure, the practice is disastrous.

This motion creates confusion, fuels prejudice and breeds mistrust. Consequently, I will not be supporting it.

●(1905)

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to add my voice to those of my official opposition colleagues on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which it is my honour to chair. They spoke eloquently to this motion and the confusion it would create.

I do not understand the motion's sponsor, who is also a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. After all, she is aware of the issues that affect all women in Canada, including the three issues at the top of Status of Women Canada's agenda: violence against women, leadership and women's economic circumstances.

I will quote from the motion, which makes it difficult to discern the government's intent since several factors seem to be mixed together:

That the House call on the government to take action to prevent forced marriages...

As we have already pointed out, like Canada as a whole, we are opposed to forced marriage, which is a form of violence against women. Marriage should be between two consenting adults. I will continue:

...and any kind of non-consensual sponsorship in the immigration system by amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations so as to:

(a) ban the use of proxy, telephone, and fax marriages as a means to spousal sponsorship;

Careful. First the motion talks about forced marriage and then it talks about proxy marriage. A forced marriage is a form of non-consensual marriage. Sometimes, both individuals are forced to marry against their will. Such unions violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, according to which everyone has the right to marry and to found a family without any limitation due to race, among other things. The marriage must be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. So much for forced marriage.

Proxy marriage is a culturally and legally acceptable way for a couple to unite. This practice is more common in countries affected by war. These marriages are legal and binding, and they are carried out with the consent of both parties.

A Canadian or a Quebecker like me might be surprised to hear that proxy marriage can happen. However, that does not mean that it is not a marriage between two consenting adults.

Earlier we heard about forced marriage, and we all understood that it was prohibited. Then, the motion goes on to talk about proxy marriage:

(b) disallow explicitly, in section 5, the use of proxy [and] telephone...marriages...

(c) set out administrative measures that communicate clearly to visa officers how to detect a proxy, telephone or fax marriage.

●(1910)

According to this motion, marriage by proxy is the same thing as forced marriage. These two types of marriage are not at all the same. Experts say so.

One thing is clear to me, my colleagues in the official opposition and many of the experts we consulted when preparing our position on this motion: we are not talking about the same thing. If the government really wants to put an end to violence against women—and forced marriage is a form of violence against women—then we need to ensure that those who suffer this type of violence have access to services and resources that will help them get out of a forced marriage if it has already been performed or prevent a forced marriage in the first place. They need to be able to get help to prevent this type of marriage and get out of that situation.

I have the privilege of representing a very diverse riding, the riding of LaSalle—Émard. I must admit that I am always very humbled as I get to know the people in my riding and understand the different people and cultures that I have the honour of representing. People call upon me and my team to resolve immigration issues. I must say that requests for assistance have been piling up since the changes were made to the immigration system. Unfortunately, things are not getting better. They are getting worse.

I recently had to defend a family from Cameroon that includes two Canadian-born children. There were many appeals to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. Many petitions were signed by members of the community in support of this Cameroonian family. I think this family faces real dangers, especially for the two daughters. This deportation really affected and upset the people in my riding. They are still talking about it. It affected me tremendously.

We see that this motion before us does not take into account all the problems refugees face in Canada. The doors close in their face. What is more, the motion does not respond at all to the extremely significant problems of violence against women, including women from all communities that are fortunate enough to live in Canada.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

*Private Members' Business*

[*English*]

(The House adjourned at 7:14 p.m.)

It being 7:14 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

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