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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, December 3, 2014

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 3, 2014

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity, on the International Day of Disabled Persons, to share one of their concerns. It is simple, but paramount. Persons with disabilities are asking to be treated like every other person. They are an integral part of society and have all the same rights as other members of society.

This is not an overly complicated request, but it is surprising how hard persons with disabilities have to fight, day in and day out, so that their rights are recognized. That includes the right to education, to work, and to receive basic services that are easily accessible to everyone else.

We need to help the public recognize the potential of persons with disabilities and encourage them to contribute to society. We also need to treat them with dignity, just like any other Canadian. That way, we can change our perception of persons with disabilities.

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[*English*]

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recruiting and retaining health care practitioners can be difficult in rural Canada. This is often further challenged by the lack of modern office space designed for health care professionals.

In my riding of South Shore—St. Margaret's, a dedicated group of local volunteers is working to change that. They are fundraising to

build a collaborative health care facility to service the municipality of Chester, the Hubbards area, Tancook Islands and my hometown of New Ross.

Our health centre will attract and provide space for primary care practitioners, wellness professionals and visiting specialists. The building will include a main reception area, information centre, six medical offices and additional clinic space.

This is an ambitious project and I would like to congratulate all who have worked on or contributed toward it. This group of dedicated volunteers has already raised \$3.1 million with a goal of raising \$4.5 million.

Please visit www.ourhealthcentre.ca to follow this terrific project and see how to donate.

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• (1405)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is International Day of Persons With Disabilities and New Democrats are celebrating the contributions Canadians with disabilities have made to this country.

We are deeply concerned though about how little progress Canada has made in meeting its obligations to improve access, employability and services to persons with disabilities under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

An estimated 4.4 million Canadians are living with disabilities and many suffer from income insecurity, substandard housing, limited employment opportunities and unequal access to the health services they depend on.

The UN charter sets goals to improve these conditions, but the government has no plan to get there. That is why we are asking today that the Government of Canada invite the UN special rapporteur on persons with disabilities to make an official visit to Canada to assist us in achieving the commitments that Canada signed on to.

The entire NDP caucus is committed to building a fairer and more prosperous Canada where each citizen has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential, and this must include our disability community.

*Statements by Members***CHARITABLE GIVING**

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to thank 12-year-old Zoe Winn of Airdrie, Alberta, for reminding us of the importance of generosity. Like thousands of Canadians, Zoe and her family support Operation Christmas Child.

Three years ago Zoe packed 30 shoeboxes. Last year, she filled 70. This year, with the outstanding support from local businesses, she packed 100 shoeboxes. That is just the beginning of Zoe's generosity. She also volunteers with Stephen's Backpacks Society, one of Airdrie's best known charitable organizations.

This society was also born of a child's generosity. In 2006, then six-year-old Stephen McPhee inspired a movement when he insisted on filling backpacks for homeless children in Calgary and across our region.

I am inspired by the generosity of these children. This Christmas season, let us all remember that a single gift can change a life. Let us also remember that the act of giving changes two lives.

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HOUSING

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the Minister of State for Social Development referenced a shelter in my riding, built by her department with federal funds. She blamed me for cost overruns approved by her department in advance.

What the minister did not tell the House was that the additional funds were needed to make the shelter accessible. In fact, what was required was an elevator. That was the reason it cost more.

These changes were required not only to meet new provincial guidelines but as I said, to make the shelter accessible for people with disabilities. That information was not in the Sun news story, so I guess it was not in her briefing notes.

On this the International Day of Persons with Disabilities does the minister really think that making housing accessible is an unacceptable cost overrun? Is it something that she defines as a waste of taxpayers' money?

On this day of all days, it is time for the minister to support making housing accessible and to stop defining reasonable accommodation and meeting provincial accessibility guidelines as a financial burden, and not something to be mocked.

Building good housing, accessible housing and affordable housing is her job. She should get to work.

* * *

NORTH VANCOUVER

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

In North Vancouver, we are starting our celebrations with lights, decorated trees, activities for kids, hot chocolate and gingerbread for all.

This Saturday at Shipbuilders' Square, the North Vancouver Christmas festival has all this and more. People can take part in lots

of fun, free activities for the whole family, like making Christmas ornaments, lanterns and gingerbread cookies. Of course, the main star of the show, Santa Claus, will be on hand for photos with the kids or people can head over to the Lynn Valley Village Plaza for the fourth annual Christmas tree walk where they can enjoy the many Christmas trees on display.

Also this year, North Vancouver's own Capilano Suspension Bridge Park hopes to once again claim the title for the world's tallest living Christmas tree, a 250-year-old Douglas fir that stands 152 feet high. This stunning sight will be draped in hundreds of thousands of twinkling lights, which have also been strung along the suspension bridge itself.

This holiday season North Vancouver is the place to be. Ho, ho, ho.

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● (1410)

[Translation]

**MONTMORENCY—CHARLEVOIX—HAUTE-CÔTE-NORD
FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN**

Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the holidays are fast approaching.

I would like to tell the House about the tremendous effort and selflessness of the hundreds of fundraisers who will soon take to the streets throughout my riding of Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord to collect donations and non-perishable food items for people in need.

This is a long-standing tradition in Quebec that deserves our encouragement and praise. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the dedication and generosity of the volunteers who get involved when the time comes to help the less fortunate in our community.

I would like to thank each and every one of the men and women who, just by sharing, make our community a better place.

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[English]

JOURNEY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the first anniversary of an organization that has done incredible work for the people of Brampton, the Journey Neighbourhood Centre in Ardglan.

It was created over a year ago to deliver social services for local residents. The centre's goal was to help unite and empower residents of the community.

Its founding was spearheaded by a great Bramptonian, Pastor Jamie Holtom. Pastor Jamie was aided by many people, including Ted Brown of Regeneration, Brampton Safe City, the United Way, Habitat for Humanity Canada, and also many local volunteers. Its efforts are currently being spearheaded by Barbara-Anne Smith.

Statements by Members

The centre took on a new role after a fire devastated the Ardglan neighbourhood. Through fundraising and support services, it has played a key role in helping those affected get back on their feet.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking the Journey Neighbourhood Centre for a fantastic first year and wishing it a very happy anniversary.

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CHARITABLE GIVING

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today to pay tribute to the generous folks in the Peace Country who are giving back this Christmas season.

Our communities are filled with hard-working people who are serious about supporting those in need. Over the past weeks, we have witnessed thousands of local residents engage in efforts that support others.

Churches, businesses, schools, community groups and others have come together to stuff shoeboxes that will be sent to poverty-stricken kids in faraway places. They have donated food to local food banks. They have collected toys for “Stuff the Bus” and “Stuff the House” campaigns to give children who are less fortunate toys this Christmas. Money, time and resources have also been given in support of others in need.

I am proud of our community. This Christmas there are many throughout the Peace Country and the world who will share in the season because of the generosity of local residents.

On behalf of the House, our government and the thousands who will benefit from their efforts, we want to thank each and every one of these people who have given back to make this Christmas season right for others.

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[Translation]

JEAN BÉLIVEAU

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Habs, Quebec and Canada have lost a great man. Last night, “Le Gros Bill”, as he was affectionately known, passed away. Jean Béliveau was a true champion as well as our captain, both on and off the ice.

Not only did he win the Stanley Cup 10 times with the Montreal Canadiens, but he also made a huge contribution to many charitable organizations over the years. His greatness, both literal and figurative, earned him a number of distinctions, including the Ordre national du Québec and the Order of Canada.

The only thing greater than his hockey career was his humility, despite all those honours. He twice refused appointments to the Senate, and he even refused the position of Governor General, for the simple reason that he wanted to stay close to his family and his community.

[English]

A gentleman on and off the ice, Jean Béliveau was truly the perfect example of an athlete whose impact goes beyond his sport and even beyond borders.

[Translation]

The torch raised by the current Montreal Canadiens players will be a little heavier now, although it will also be raised a little higher, in honour of this great man.

Thank you, Mr. Béliveau.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under our new family tax cut and benefits, all families with children in Canada will be better off. One hundred per cent of families with children will benefit by an average of over \$1,100 per year. A single mother with two kids who earns \$30,000 will benefit by \$1,500.

Our family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit will put money back in the pockets of Canadian families. We are doing so because we believe that Canadian families know best how to spend their money.

The Liberals and the NDP would take that money away from Canadian families and give it to big government bureaucracy. We won't let them get away with it.

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● (1415)

PARKDALE ANTI-VIOLENCE EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): As we approach the 25th anniversary of the Montreal massacre, I want to pay tribute to work in my riding done by PAVE, the Parkdale Anti-Violence Education Working Group. This coalition of service providers takes action on International Women's Day, Take Back the Night, and December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

I am proud to join PAVE each year to present the Rose McGroarty Memorial Scholarship to a woman who has survived violence and has enhanced the lives of other women and children in Parkdale.

PAVE brings together women from the community to help them develop into leaders and find their voice to fight sexual violence and the accompanying silence and isolation.

Let us all thank groups like PAVE that work to end violence against women so that the Montreal massacre is never repeated.

*Statements by Members***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement, Canada's first with an Asian market, will create thousands of new jobs in Canada and will provide Canadian business and workers with a gateway to Asia. Having lived in Asia and worked there for a decade, I can attest personally to the importance of that gateway.

Last week, the Minister of International Trade informed this House that the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement had passed third reading in the Senate. Today this fabulous minister announced that the legislation has received royal assent. This announcement coincides with the passage of the FTA in the South Korean National Assembly yesterday.

With this latest milestone, Canada and South Korea are on track to bring the agreement into force on January 1, 2015, fulfilling the commitment made by our Prime Minister and the President of South Korea.

Canadians know that when it comes to opening new markets and creating export opportunities for Canadian businesses, only this Conservative Government can be trusted to deliver the goods.

* * *

[Translation]

JEAN BÉLIVEAU

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had an extraordinary childhood during which my father introduced me to kings, queens and presidents, but he was never more proud than when he was able to introduce his eldest son to Jean Béliveau.

Every time I met Mr. Béliveau thereafter and shook his hand, I saw what an impact he had not just on me, but on everyone around him. He was a man who epitomized dignity, respect and kindness.

[English]

Jean Béliveau was a man of class, of strength, who demonstrated the kind of leadership that inspired not just players but all who watched and met him. He will be greatly missed, but he will continue to inspire generations of not just young hockey players but of Canadians across this great country.

[Translation]

At this difficult time, our thoughts go out to his family: his wife Élise, his daughter Héléne, and his grandchildren.

We will miss you, Gros Bill.

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JEAN BÉLIVEAU

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was saddened to learn that Canada lost a legendary hockey player, Jean Béliveau, whom many people affectionately called "Le Gros Bill".

On the ice, he led the Montreal Canadiens to 10 Stanley Cup wins, five of them back to back in the 1950s and 1960s.

The owner of the Montreal Canadiens, Mr. Molson, put it well when he said that Mr. Béliveau made an immeasurable contribution to the development of our sport and our society.

Jean Béliveau was a great leader, a gentleman and without a doubt the most extraordinary ambassador that our national sport has ever had. Mr. Béliveau was named an honorary Team Canada member and the honorary captain of Canada's 2010 men's Olympic hockey team.

Some of the other honours bestowed on him include the Order of Canada, the Ordre national du Québec, having his image on a postage stamp and, in 1971, having his number 4 jersey retired.

We extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

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[English]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we approach the end of the session, we see more poor performances from the front bench of the Conservative Party. The Minister of the Environment, who frequently heckles, has been reduced to reading the newspaper in the House. The Minister of Veterans Affairs does not get much of an endorsement from the PM, but he does get a PMO staffer to babysit him. The Minister of State for Social Development does not think that questions should be asked in question period. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is going to sell the Canadian Wheat Board to his buddies from Chicago for the low, low price of zero dollars.

It all adds up to a government that does not take responsibility for its actions, that will never admit to any mistakes, and that is counting out the remaining days of personal drivers and expense accounts.

Who will be today's symbol of this tired and out of touch Conservative government?

* * *

● (1420)

TAXATION

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it feels like Santa Claus has come to town early this year. Our new family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit will help 100% of families with kids by an average of over \$1,100 a year. The majority of benefits will flow to low and middle-income families.

Families in my riding of Don Valley West are pleased that we are putting more money back into their pockets so they can spend it on their priorities.

Let me tell the House about three important things we know. First, our Conservative government is on track to balance Canada's budget. Second, our family tax cut will help families balance their family budget. Third, and most importantly, the Liberal leader thinks a budget can balance itself.

Our government will continue to help Canadian families keep their hard-earned money in their pockets.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Veterans Affairs is obviously facing a growing demand for services given that an entire generation of Afghanistan veterans is approaching retirement. Meanwhile, the Conservatives decided to cut the department's staff by 25%. Nearly 1,000 professionals who know our veterans have been fired by this government.

How is the Department of Veterans Affairs supposed to help a growing number of veterans with 1,000 fewer employees?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is increasing services for veterans by cutting red tape.

I would like to note that today, we have lost Jean Béliveau, a great Canadian both on and off the ice. He was a giant in our national sport and in our national life.

I would like to express our condolences and our admiration to his family and friends.

[English]

I just want to repeat that today we have lost Jean Béliveau, a truly great Canadian and Canadien. He was a giant in our national sport and in our national life. We all want to express our condolences and our admiration to his family and friends.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, staff at Veterans Affairs even warned the minister that these layoffs created a risk that Veterans Affairs would be unable to meet the needs of veterans, Canadian Forces members, and their families. Nine veterans service centres have been closed, and 1,000 staff have been laid off. The minister is knowingly putting our veterans at risk.

Instead of firing the staff, why does the Prime Minister not fire the minister?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is the reality. We have taken resources out of backroom administration, from bureaucracy. We have put it into services. There are more benefits and more money for veterans than ever before, and more points of service. That is called good administration, good government, and it is good service for the veterans of this country.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' callous disregard for our veterans does not end there.

Conservatives are now arguing before the courts that the government's repeated promises over the years to care for injured vets were just political promises and should never have been taken seriously to begin with. I quote: "These statements were political speeches not intended as commitments or solemn commitments."

Does the Prime Minister stand by that argument, made by his own lawyer in court, that the government's promises to veterans were just political speeches?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am obviously not going to comment on matters before the courts. What I can say is the following: The substantive matter is a measure passed by the previous government, and supported by all parties in this House, including the NDP.

The reality is that this government has enhanced veterans services in numerous ways. We brought in the Canadian Forces income support allowance, which the NDP voted against. We brought in the veterans bill of rights, which the NDP voted against. We brought in compensation on the Agent Orange issue, which the NDP voted against. There were enhancements to the veterans independence program, which the NDP voted against. I could go on.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately for the Prime Minister, he is proving that he actually does think that they were only political speeches. He does not think veterans in our country have a right to service.

He has said through his lawyers in court, in Canada, that these are political speeches and that those promises should never have been taken seriously.

Instead of blaming the veterans for actually taking his word, why does he not start respecting his word?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the items I just listed are not political rhetoric. They are real services and programs for our veterans.

The rhetoric is from these guys, who when actually faced with doing something for veterans, vote against them every single time. We deliver.

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HEALTH

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP will reopen every one of those nine offices.

This week, members of Parliament voted unanimously in favour of an NDP motion to give ongoing support to the victims of thalidomide. When will this vote be followed by action by the government? When will the Prime Minister confirm specific funding for ongoing support for victims of thalidomide in our country?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, the government has committed to that, and the minister and the department continue to meet with the victims association.

Oral Questions

However, it is good to know that the NDP will hire more bureaucrats at Veterans Affairs. What it will not do is vote for enhanced funding for the community war memorial program, enhanced benefits under the earning loss and supplementary retirement benefit program. The NDP will not vote for the financial support program. It will not vote for career transition services, for mental health services, for disability awards and allowances. That is the difference between the rhetoric over there and the action here.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thought we had reached the point where we could not be shocked anymore by the Prime Minister's shoddy treatment of our veterans, but now we learn that to pad his books, he has actually underfunded our military cemeteries. He has cut 80% of the staff doing this solemn work. Thousands of grave markers needed repair and were not fixed last year.

When will the Prime Minister apologize for his disrespect of our veterans?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note that the government has enhanced funeral services for our veterans through successive budgets. It has also enhanced the contributions to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Guess who stood in their places and voted against that? The member for Papineau and the Liberal Party, once again. Veterans are not fooled. They know all they get is rhetoric from the Liberal Party. They get actions and services from this government.

[Translation]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have now learned that the Prime Minister's negligence toward veterans goes beyond what we ever could have imagined.

In addition to failing those who need mental health services, today we learned that the Conservatives cut resources for military cemeteries.

Will the Prime Minister finally apologize for his disrespect for our veterans?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the government has enhanced funeral services for our veterans through successive budgets. We have also enhanced the contributions to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Every time we have enhanced these benefits and services for veterans, the member for Papineau and his party have voted against them. The Liberal Party is all about rhetoric. Our government is about action and services.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, there will be a memorial service to mark the tragic events at École Polytechnique.

Although the Minister of Justice does not seem to want to understand what happened, will the Prime Minister finally meet with the group Polytechnique Remembers, the survivors and their families who have some serious concerns about his firearms bill?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the member for Papineau is mistaken.

[English]

We all know that Marc Lépine singled out women for his slaughter. One can never understand why somebody would ever act like that.

This week we will remember those 14 lives that were so tragically snuffed out. This government will continue its commitment to work against criminals, to crack down on crime, and also to support victims and prevent these kinds of horrific actions.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if we are going to combat climate change, everyone needs to work together.

China and the United States have agreed to co-operate with the international community, but here in Canada, the minister continues to play dirty. She refuses to include the opposition in the Canadian delegation going to Lima for the climate change conference. Furthermore, she does not even want to give us a briefing to explain what will be on the table at the conference.

Why does the minister keep playing games with the opposition and the international community?

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have always said that for any international agreement to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, all major economies and emitters must do their part.

With the United States and China accounting for 39% of the emissions, we are encouraged by the promises they have made to reduce their emissions as Canada emits less than 2% of GHG emissions.

In 2012, Canada's GHG emissions were roughly 5% lower than 2000 levels, while the economy grew by 10%. We will continue to play our part by reducing emissions at home and working with our partners across the globe to establish an international agreement that includes all emitters.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, by showing up empty-handed at the UN conference on climate change in Lima and by having one of the worst environmental records in the G20, the Conservatives are losing more and more credibility and becoming increasingly isolated, as is the Minister of the Environment.

There are 195 countries coming together to negotiate a legal framework to replace Kyoto, so why are the Conservatives trying to sabotage it?

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is playing a leadership role on the international stage. We have helped over 60 developing countries reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.

We are also doing our part by contributing to the green climate fund. We are also a founding member and major financial contributor to the climate and clean air coalition. We are also addressing short-lived climate pollutants under Canada's chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

We will continue to protect our environment, while keeping our economy strong.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister noticed, while reading the headlines in question period the other day, that our trading partners are moving on climate change and Canadians want action.

Her department, Environment Canada, says that the government is going to miss its targets, that the oil and gas sector has the largest emissions and it is going to continue to grow the fastest.

The world is watching. Will the minister announce, finally, oil and gas regulations?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have said before, this is a continental issue that needs a North American solution.

Our government will continue to work with the United States on reducing greenhouse gas emissions for the oil and gas sector. We feel it is best to align with the United States, as we have with the transportation sector.

We will continue to protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a way that maintains job creation and economic growth for Canada.

• (1435)

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just as the conference in Lima got under way, the minister made an 11th hour funding announcement for green climate finance. However, the problem is that the money was not in the budget or the estimates. Key important details like where the money would come from, how it would be spent, how it would be paid out and over how long a period of time were left out.

Could the minister confirm that this is new money, and that it will be paid out this year?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government wants to reach a fair agreement in Paris that includes all emitters and all economies.

It is important that an agreement be durable, flexible and effective. Meanwhile, Canada will continue to take concrete actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while keeping our economy strong.

As Canada emits less than 2% of the greenhouse gas emissions globally, Canada's current capita emissions are now at their lowest level since we started recording in 1990.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, time and time again we come to the House and the minister trumpets all these Liberal failures on climate change like it is a free pass for her to do nothing. However, it has been eight years. It is time that the Conservatives quit finger pointing and actually start doing their job.

Climate change is a clear and dire threat to Canadians. The negotiations in Lima urgently need leadership and ambition. Is the government finally going to take climate change seriously? Will it commit to a binding global agreement?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have always said that for an international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, all major economies and major emitters must do their part.

With the United States and China accounting for 39% of greenhouse gas emissions, we are very encouraged by the promises they have made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as Canada emits less than 2%.

We will continue to play our part by reducing emissions at home, and work with our partners across the globe to establish an international agreement that includes all economies and all emitters.

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ETHICS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been trying to work with my colleagues on the government side to deepen their understanding of section 404 of the Canada Elections Act.

This is what we know. A corruption scheme was set up by SNC-Lavalin to funnel political money to key politicians, and the Minister of International Development was one of those politicians. He has admitted that his riding association received \$25,000 under this scheme, which would make those donations illegal. We now know the name of the SNC executives who funnelled the money.

Oral Questions

Therefore, it is a straightforward ask. Why not just strike the names of those contributions? Does the Minister of State for Democratic Reform not believe that this is part of living up to the Canada Elections Act?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we know, donations are limited to \$1,200 a year, and those are personal donations. Our party certainly does not accept donations that do not respect the law.

At the same time, we support Elections Canada as it investigates SNC-Lavalin. If Elections Canada finds that SNC-Lavalin made illegal donations, then we, as we would expect the Liberals and the party of the Leader of the Opposition, will refund those monies.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged. We are starting to come out of the darkness and getting closer and closer to the light.

We are talking about the administrative work of government, because a key cabinet minister was the recipient of a political corruption scheme.

The names of the SNC-Lavalin executives who funnelled the money are known. Why wait until the end of somebody else's investigation? What we need to understand is whether the minister will reassure Canadians and tell them he that wants nothing to do with this SNC scheme, that he will stand and say that he will do the right thing and return that money so we can have confidence in his role as a government minister.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just answered that, and I just indicated that.

At the same time, I suggested that the Liberals, as well as the Leader of the Opposition's party, should do the exact same thing.

Let us remember that it was this party that brought in the Federal Accountability Act, which took out the influence of big unions and big money from the political process. Unfortunately, the NDP did not read that law because it immediately broke it by accepting some \$300,000 worth of illegal union contributions. We have not even got to the \$1.5 million that it still owes Canadians for illegal satellite offices.

• (1440)

[Translation]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives need to stop hiding behind an inquiry that might not be completed until after the next election.

The Marteau squad and the Charbonneau commission uncovered a well-organized scheme through which SNC-Lavalin, using false names, paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to the parties in power. A number of SNC-Lavalin executives admitted everything. Now it is the Conservatives' turn to come clean.

Can the Minister of State for Democratic Reform assure us that the money will be reimbursed, or will he allow his party to campaign with dirty money?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, if Elections Canada's investigation indicates that SNC-Lavalin donated illegally, then we, as we would expect the Liberals and the party of the Leader of the Opposition, will refund any of those monies.

With respect to the Charbonneau Commission, I would suggest she ask the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Outremont, who actually served as a cabinet minister in the government that is indicated in that Charbonneau Commission investigation. At the same time, I would ask her to refresh her memory, with respect to the Federal Accountability Act, which makes accepting union donations illegal.

We would also encourage the return of that \$1.5 million the NDP has illegally taken from the Canadian taxpayers for satellite offices. There are areas where—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, dirty money seems to be a Conservative specialty.

We have witnessed the Minister of Veterans Affairs boasting about his failure to help veterans.

We have witnessed the Minister of the Environment reading a newspaper in order to evade questions about the Conservatives failure to manage the Nutrition North program, while people go hungry in her riding. Now there is boasting about the government when it has one of the worst environmental records in the industrialized world.

There has been abject failure on veterans affairs and on the environment.

My question is for the Prime Minister. When will Conservatives acknowledge their many mistakes and when will those ministers start doing their jobs?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the record of our government and of our ministers in particular, who perform very strongly.

What is sad is that in the face of declining poll standings and in the face of very weak policies, the NDP has decided it will, instead, resort to a new strategy: the strategy of personal attacks.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister suggested that the reason he had been absent on his file is because he was in Italy commemorating those killed in the Second World War. He suggested “Lest We Forget” meant something different to him.

Oral Questions

Last year, he cut \$2.5 million from the very program responsible for preserving the memory of deceased Canadians who served us in war and peace. He fired 33 people who were responsible for maintaining these symbols of remembrance, including the memorial he visited in Italy.

Could he tell us why the hypocrisy, or has he already forgotten?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to ensure that we have the right people in the right locations to assist our veterans and their families. Our government has invested billions of new dollars since 2006 in veterans' benefits and services, investments for new front-line mental-health clinics, and new access for veterans' families to family centres on seven military bases. We will continue to make improvements to support our Canadian veterans and their families.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that must explain the vote-anything-but-Conservative movement, because they are so happy. He cannot have it both ways.

He cannot explain away savage cuts to veterans' services—lapsed billions, nine closed veterans centres—by standing up as the minister of commemorations and then turn around and slash the program responsible for the preservation of the memorials to those who fought and died for Canada.

Why did the Conservatives cut \$2.5 million last year and fire 33 people responsible for maintaining Canadian symbols of remembrance? Of course, it was for more advertising, right?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated, our government has invested billions of dollars in improving the quality of life of veterans and their families. However, it is quite ironic that in budget submissions, the main estimates of June 6, 2012, the Liberals declined to support Commonwealth War Graves Commission funding to make sure that our deceased service members' graves were well maintained. Also, education assistance programs for children of deceased veterans were not funded by the Liberals.

• (1445)

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it would be nice if he showed up to explain the main estimates.

Since 2008, the Conservatives have cut 949 positions or about 25% of the workforce. They let billions lapse and closed nine veterans centres, but they have still been able to increase Veterans Affairs advertising. It was \$4 million in the spring and \$5 million this fall. After chastising war service vets, running away from Jenny Migneault and failing to answer basic questions, is the real reason the minister has not yet been fired because he is really just doing the Prime Minister's bidding?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in order to support veterans and their families with better programs and services, our government has made significant investments in mental health treatment for Canadian veterans. We have shifted bureaucratic resources to front-line service delivery. We have doubled the number of counselling sessions. We will assign Veterans Affairs employees to several military bases to speed up medical file transfers between our two departments. All of this is building on improvements that we have been making since 2006, and we will continue to do so.

[*Translation*]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is the 23rd International Day of Disabled Persons. One in six Canadians live with a disability and they are three times more likely to live in poverty. Canada has signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, yet the government has done nothing to fulfill its obligations.

Why is the government making cuts to affordable housing and door-to-door mail delivery instead of putting a plan in place to respond to the needs of those living with a disability?

[*English*]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians with disabilities know that there is no other government that has been as supportive of them, not only in terms of assisting them but also including them in and helping them access the workplace and other community places.

We have renewed the labour market agreements for persons with disabilities. This has helped over 289,000 Canadians with disabilities to find employment. We have increased funding for the opportunities fund and for the enabling accessibility fund. We have introduced the historic registered disability savings plan.

Every one of these initiatives that we have introduced and promoted for people with disabilities, the New Democrats have voted against, unfortunately.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Canadians living with disabilities, the Conservatives have been all show and no substance. They signed the UN convention, but they have not fully implemented it; they created huge backlogs at the Social Security Tribunal; they cut home mail delivery; and they have done nothing to address housing challenges or the high levels of poverty among Canadians with disabilities. Canadians deserve better.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs invite the UN Special Rapporteur on Disability to come to assess Canada's progress and make recommendations for improvement?

Oral Questions

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what we are doing. This government is meeting with Canadians with disabilities who want to be in the workplace, who want community places to be accessible. We are listening to them and we have responded, whether it is with our enabling accessibility program, our opportunities fund, or our renewed labour market agreements.

Canadians who have disabilities but also a number of amazing abilities know that this government recognizes that and wants them to be included in all aspects of Canadian life.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2012 the Conservatives cut one-third of the staff at the Canadian Grain Commission and said there would not be any impact. Well, surprise, there was. There were fewer inspections, and now buyers of Canadian wheat are complaining about under-weight shipments and variable quality. In fact, one foreign-based buyer found 850 kilograms of peas in what was supposed to be a wheat shipment.

Under the minister's watch, the commission cannot get farmers' grain to market, cannot assure the quality of the grain at market, and cannot even deliver the right quantity to the market.

When will the minister stand in his place, apologize to Canadian wheat farmers, and tell them that he intends to make it right and that he will stop failing Canadian farmers in the future?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite likes to cherry-pick his facts. I have some great ones here.

The number of Canadian farms earning half a million dollars and more has increased by 166%. Farm cash receipts for the first three-quarters of this year totalled \$42 billion, higher than previous years. Livestock receipts are up over 15% from the same period last year and now total \$18 billion. Net cash income reached \$12.7 billion in 2013, higher than it has ever been, and crop receipts rose by 4%.

We have a great story to tell for farmers across Canada.

● (1450)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, allow me to rephrase a question from yesterday.

At first glance, we might think that it is completely crazy to give away all the significant assets of the Canadian Wheat Board to an American agri-food giant until we look at who is on the board of directors of that corporation. It is none other than the paper bag prince himself, Brian Mulroney, and then it starts to look like Conservative on Conservative shenanigans.

Now there are two options: either this monumental corporate giveaway is completely crazy or it is an unconscionable handout to a well-connected Conservative. Which is it?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the antics of my friend from Winnipeg Centre are well-known across Canada. A number of law firms have sent their kids through college on the fees they have collected as he apologizes and pays out dollars to people he has wronged.

The member is wrong again. This is a process driven by the CWB through a recognized audit and legal firm looking at the process and making sure that everything is fair and above board.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is International Day for Persons with Disabilities, a day that serves to remind us that all Canadians need to be treated with dignity and equality. Thanks to the strong leadership of the Prime Minister, our Conservative government is a world leader in providing support for Canadians living with disabilities.

Could the Minister of State for Social Development please explain what this government is doing to help Canadians with disabilities gain the skills they need to obtain jobs?

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Brant for the great work he is doing on behalf of Canadians with disabilities.

No government has done more to support Canadians of all abilities than our government through the great programs I have already mentioned. Through the labour market agreements for persons with disabilities, we have helped over 289,000 Canadians with disabilities find jobs. We have also fulfilled our promise to reform the opportunities fund. I just launched the new national call for proposals this past Monday.

Canadians can be proud of our actions to ensure that all Canadians of all abilities can participate and contribute to our communities and economy.

* * *

[Translation]

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as if muzzling our scientists were not enough, now the Conservatives have decided to once again cut funding to the Canadian Space Agency. Funding will be cut by \$50 million next year and \$100 million in two years. Dozens of employees will lose their jobs.

How can the Conservatives claim to care about the aerospace industry, which is centred in Quebec, when they keep gutting one of its success stories, year after year?

[English]

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we are very proud of Canada's role in space, topped off last year by the remarkable job of leadership that Chris Hadfield showed us as leader of the International Space Station.

Oral Questions

In fact, we have answered the questions that have been raised by communities who are looking for leadership from Ottawa on the space file. We had the Emerson space report that came to the Government of Canada and we have acted on every single one of those recommendations. We have moved forward, including in this year's budget, with new commitments to Canada's space framework.

In fact, Suzanne Benoit, president of Aéro Montréal, said: "We salute the government's vision in making space sector a priority" for the Government of Canada.

We are taking action, delivering the goods for the space sector.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the senseless cuts to the Canadian Space Agency come after a decade of budget freezes under Liberal and Conservative governments.

While NASA is launching Exploration Flight Test-1 tomorrow, the first crew-capable spacecraft to leave low-earth orbit in more than 40 years, the Conservatives prefer cutting funding to science across the board and muzzling scientists.

Why is the government pursuing these cuts to the CSA? Why is it laying people off from our space agency?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the space agency is strong and going in the right direction under the leadership that we have put forward. Better than that, we have added new effective funding, for example, renewing our commitment for the James Webb Space Telescope, which will advance the globe's understanding of the cosmos and all that it entails for the future of scientific discovery.

This is something that the global scientific community has asked for. Canada has always been a leader in space. It continues to be a leader, and it will partner with these key projects that will keep Canada in the very front row of leaders in space.

* * *

• (1455)

JUSTICE

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new report from the Department of Justice shows that the number of aboriginal women in Canada who are behind bars has grown by a shocking 97% in the decade since 2002. This overrepresentation is compounded by a lack of access to culturally appropriate programming and rehabilitation, and the complex needs of many aboriginal women offenders.

Does the minister acknowledge that when one community doubles its representation in prison in a decade, the status quo is simply not working?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the unique challenges that aboriginal people face in the criminal justice system. They are clearly overrepresented.

That is why it has been our priority to invest in programs such as the aboriginal justice strategy, and since 2007 we have committed to record levels of funding for the aboriginal justice strategy. This funding and these investments support community-based justice programs aimed at lowering crime rates, reducing the over-

representation, as I mentioned, and contributing to the safety and security of on-reserve residents.

We must all continue to work together with our first nations to improve their quality of life.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative tough on crime agenda is disproportionately impacting aboriginal women, who now make up fully one-third of all incarcerated women in Canada.

The Correctional Investigator has warned the government that there is an urgent need for change in the way aboriginal offenders are treated. His warnings were dismissed by the minister, and now we have a crisis on our hands.

Instead of continuing this failed approach, why does the government not invest in community resources to prevent aboriginal women from being criminalized in the first place?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what we are doing. We are investing specifically in aboriginal justice programs. We are working across many departments to ensure that we encourage more aboriginal people to participate more fully in Canadian society and the Canadian economy.

We have tabled legislation specifically aimed at ending violence on reserve and around the country. The sad reality is that on all of those occasions when we have brought forward legislation to protect aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, giving them matrimonial property rights, for example, and putting forward legislation that holds offenders accountable, and doing more to protect streets and communities across the country, the NDP has opposed those measures.

* * *

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's trip to the Arctic was a \$786,000 photo op this past summer. Did he not see the homelessness and the hunger of the northern and Inuit people? Did anyone inform the government of people digging in landfill sites for food?

The minister for the area has been a dismal failure. The needs of the people are not being looked after. She is burying her head in a newspaper when important questions are being asked in the House of Commons.

When will the Prime Minister stop posing for photo ops in the Arctic and start filling the cupboards of Inuit people?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated in the House yesterday, the well-being of Nunavummiut and their families has always been my top priority and continues to be.

Oral Questions

As an Inuk born and raised in Canada's Arctic, I know how important access to healthy food is for our children and for our families. I also know how important it is for Inuit people to maintain their traditional hunt, whether that be the seal hunt, the polar bear, the beluga, or the narwhal. I will continue to stand up for northerners and Inuit for healthy food.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of belugas, the government is responsible for this whole Cacouna mess. Why has it not done anything to protect belugas or the other 66 species that have been deemed at risk by scientists since 2011?

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans' director general for the Quebec region said that the area around Cacouna needs to be protected. He said that the decree will reflect that.

Does the minister agree with her director general or will she, once again, shirk her responsibilities?

● (1500)

[English]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is already illegal to kill, capture, harass, or harm the beluga whale or to destroy its habitat under the Species at Risk Act, the fisheries protection provisions of the Fisheries Act, and the marine mammal regulations.

St. Lawrence belugas are listed as threatened, and all the required protections are currently in place. COSEWIC has proposed to list it as endangered. A decision will be made after consultations are held—that is the process—and information and impacts are analyzed.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, the Government of Canada decided to use a refurbished bakery warehouse for the Canada Science and Technology Museum. The result was an uninspiring facade, leaky roofs, mouldy walls, and exposure to asbestos. Now we learn the government knew the museum's roof was collapsing.

While the Conservatives were spending over half a million dollars to re-brand the Museum of Civilization, they let asbestos rain down on exhibits and a collapsing roof compromise visitors' safety. Why did the minister delay funding and let things get this bad?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was absolutely pleased to announce, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the MP for Ottawa—Orléans, that our government has proudly invested in the museum of science and technology to modernize, upgrade, and repair this treasured institution. Our Conservative government has in fact made significant investments into our Canadian national museums since 2006.

To be honest, I do not know how to take that question, because if the New Democrats actually cared about our national museums, they

would not have voted against the vital investments to, for example, the Canadian Museum of History. We will take no lessons from them. We will be proud of our investment.

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they are asleep at the switch. Even with mould, a decrepit roof and asbestos, school groups were still being allowed in. Think about it: that is unbelievable, but the Conservatives have known about it since 2013. What are they waiting for?

The Museum of Science and Technology is important, but the government has been dragging its feet on this file at least since 2013, if not before, and that has put people at risk.

Can the Conservatives explain why they have been so slow to react on this file?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, we are very proud of our recent announcement for the Museum of Science and Technology to modernize, upgrade and repair this treasured institution.

However, once again, as I said, our Conservative government has made significant investments in our Canadian national museums. Every time we do that though, the NDP decides to vote against things like our investments in the Canadian Museum of History, which is in Gatineau, close to where the member who just asked the question is from.

If they really care, they will vote for these investments, not against them.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on October 26, Ukraine held its parliamentary elections. Canada sent over 300 observers to monitor these elections. As well as having the largest contingent of any contributor, our government has been the strongest of the international supporters of Ukraine as it works to restore its economic stability and implement democratic reforms. That includes our Prime Minister telling Vladimir Putin to his face to “get out of Ukraine.”

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence please comment on this development?

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Etobicoke Centre for all his hard work in support of a democratic, strong, and prosperous Ukraine.

Yesterday we learned that the Ukrainian parliament voted in favour of a new Ukrainian cabinet, which happens to also be the anniversary of Canada being the first western nation to recognize Ukraine's independence.

We encourage the new government to work with the people of Ukraine in fulfilling their economic and democratic aspirations. Restoring the public's confidence in the institutions is one of the many priorities the government of Ukraine must endeavour to achieve.

Canada will always stand with the people of Ukraine, and we look forward to working with the new Ukrainian government.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2004 Parks Canada began an archaeological dig at the 17th century Acadian village of Beaubassin in Cumberland County, Nova Scotia. After finding over 6,000 artifacts and the foundations of 40 structures, the area was declared a national historic site and bought.

Unfortunately, work on the site ceased three years ago. Will the heritage minister ensure that funds are provided to at least establish an interpretation centre and proper explanation of this incredible Acadian site in time for Canada's 150th anniversary?

● (1505)

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parks Canada is committed to protecting the environment. Since we formed government, we have created a number of parks, two national marine conservation areas, three marine protected areas, three national wildlife areas, two national parks, and one national historic site.

It is a shame that those members of the opposition will not be supporting the Rouge national park bill that is going before the House at third reading.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week we have reports of the stoning to death of two gay men in Syria. That is the reality too many LGBT refugees face around the world.

When seeking asylum in Canada, LGBT refugees rightly fear disclosing their status for fear that the basis of their claim will be revealed and violence will follow.

Gay refugees from Uganda have been attacked and murdered in a Kenyan camp after making Canadian refugee claims. Will the minister commit to concrete action to ensure the safety of LGBTQ refugees making claims for asylum in Canada?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in Canada is proud of our role in providing protection and refuge to those from the LGBT community who have sought that protection from around the world.

We did so in the spirit of the conference recently held in Toronto. We have done so on a large scale in the case of Iran.

If there are other cases the member would like to bring to our attention, I invite him to do so outside of this place.

Oral Questions

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a steadfast supporter of the World Food Programme. All Canadians are proud that Canada is the third-largest contributor to this program, and we pay what we pledge. We applaud the organization's indispensable work in fighting global hunger, especially in conflict zones such as Syria and Iraq.

With that in mind, I rise today to express my complete dismay at the acclamation of Iran as a member of the World Food Programme executive board.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights please comment on this development?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the selection of Iran to the World Food Programme executive board is completely regrettable.

Iran continues to be an agitator to peace and security. Its actions, in particular in Syria, have contributed to the ongoing suffering and food shortages that the World Food Programme aims to alleviate.

We do not see how a regime that so blatantly inflames starvation can have any credibility within this organization.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many cheese producers in my region are worried about what free trade between Canada and Europe might lead to. Although they have developed some fine, high-quality cheeses, many are afraid that the arrival of several tonnes of subsidized European cheese will undermine our fledgling industry.

Quebec cheese makers have proposed countervailing measures to ensure the sustainability of the industry. Will the Conservatives examine that proposal and compensate cheese makers appropriately?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member that we have signed the free trade agreement with the European Union and the party opposite has yet to support that agreement.

One very specific provision clearly informs cheese makers in Quebec and Canada that there will be a compensation mechanism. We are currently in negotiations with them and compensation will follow in due course.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, one of Canada's most respected conservatives, Preston Manning, is calling for a price on carbon. He knows that the marketplace can reduce CO2 pollution.

Truly Conservative MPs should support carbon fee and dividend. Not a penny goes to government, and money goes right into the pockets of Canadian families.

Which Conservatives will dare to publicly agree with Mr. Manning and let markets reduce both CO2 and poverty?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike all the opposition parties, we do not believe in a carbon tax.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: That concludes question period for today.

I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Mrs. Barbara Winters. She was one of the first upon the scene at the war memorial on October 22 and provided first aid to Corporal Cirillo as well as support and encouragement to him as he fought for his life. Today she received the Deputy Minister of Justice Humanitarian Excellence Award.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

● (1510)

[Translation]

JEAN BÉLIVEAU

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among parties in the House.

I believe that if you seek it you would find unanimous consent for the following motion, and for a moment of silence to be observed in the House of Commons to recognize the death of a legendary Montreal Canadian.

The motion reads as follows:

That the House

recognize that Jean Béliveau was a legendary captain of the Montreal Canadiens; recognize that Canadians are deeply touched by the loss of this gentleman, who left his mark on an era through both his athletic excellence and his strength of character;

celebrate his brilliant career marked by 18 seasons with the Montreal Canadiens and 10 Stanley Cups;

and offer its condolences to his wife Élise, his daughter Hélène, his two granddaughters Mylène and Magalie, as well as the entire Montreal Canadiens family, which was part of his life for over six decades.

[English]

The Speaker: Does the hon. member 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)

The Speaker: We will now have a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence observed]

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) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to four petitions.

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the 63rd Westminster seminar on practice and procedure held in London, United Kingdom, from June 16 to 20, 2014.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the reports of the Canadian delegation of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting: the meeting of the standing committee held in Riga, Latvia, April 4 to April 6, 2014; its participation in the joint visit of the Sub-committee on the Transatlantic Relations and the Sub-committee on the Transatlantic Economic Relations, held in Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia, April 30 to May 3, 2014; and the 2014 spring session, held in Vilnius, Lithuania, May 30 to June 1, 2014.

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● (1515)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-32, An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided, unanimously, to report the bill back to this House with amendments.

Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill S-221, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assaults against public transit operators).

The committee has studied the bill and has decided, unanimously, to report the bill back to this House without amendments.

I hope the House leaders move quickly on both these items.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-639, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of critical infrastructures).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce my private member's bill to protect Canada's critical infrastructure.

Currently, the punishment for those who interfere with critical infrastructure is not appropriately defined in the Criminal Code, relative to the severity of these acts. Across Canada, interference with critical infrastructure has put communities at risk. These acts should be considered more than just petty crimes.

The legislation, which I propose today, would keep our communities safe by providing law enforcement with an additional tool to protect and secure critical infrastructure. Balanced and fair, this bill is a result of months of consultations with stakeholders across Canada.

This legislation would create a new offence under the Criminal Code to capture conduct related to interference with critical infrastructure and would provide the flexibility required to adapt to the changing nature of threats. By promoting harsher sentencing, the measures proposed would deter criminals and punish those whose crimes cause serious economic disruptions and endanger the public safety of Canadians.

I ask my colleagues in this House to support this legislation, and I look forward to their input and debate.

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

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 27th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, requesting an extension to consider Motion No. 428 presented to the House earlier, be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Routine Proceedings

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

SEX SELECTION

Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of numerous British Columbians to table a petition that refers to over 200 million missing girls worldwide. This femicide has created a global gender imbalance and crisis, resulting in violence and the human trafficking of girls.

The petitioners call on Parliament to condemn discrimination against girls occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination.

CANADA POST

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I submit a petition on behalf of the many residents in my riding regarding postal services, which have diminished greatly over the past while: Saturday services, home delivery, as well as extended hours, and in many cases small communities actually losing their postal outlet.

This petition comes from the community of Leading Ticksles.

● (1520)

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from constituents in my riding of Wellington—Halton Hills, predominantly from the town of Erin, who call on the government to apply a fee to greenhouse gas emissions and for the money raised from the fee to be distributed among Canadians.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to present a petition from a large number of Canadians who are asking the Government of Canada to acknowledge that the current impaired driving laws are too lenient. In the interest of public safety, these citizens of Canada want tougher laws and the implementation of new mandatory minimum sentencing for those persons convicted of impaired driving causing death.

They also want the Criminal Code of Canada to be changed to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a documentary by Canada's public broadcaster, the CBC, revealed that ultrasounds are being used in Canada to tell the sex of an unborn baby, so that people can choose to terminate the pregnancy of the unborn child if it is a girl.

[*Translation*]

An overwhelming majority of Canadians believe that terminating a pregnancy because of the sex of the child should be illegal.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

Both the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada and the Canadian Association of Radiologists strongly oppose the non-medical use of fetal ultrasounds.

[Translation]

I have the honour—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, it was not clear at all that the member is actually reading a petition. He has not indicated who has signed it. He knows the rules of the House, that 25 people must sign for it to be presentable in the House of Commons.

It was not clear at all to me that this is a duly-presentable petition that the member is tabling.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I appreciate the intervention by the hon. member. I think the hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans will be getting around to that.

I know the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster is correct and that the member for Ottawa—Orléans will know that the explanation around petitions should not be a commentary by the member himself but, rather, on behalf of petitioners. I am sure that he will be getting around to that point in short order.

The hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Mr. Speaker, the record will show that the hon. House leader of the official opposition was interrupting me at the time that I was stating in Canada's other official language that I was, forthwith, tabling the petition.

This is what I was saying as I was so rudely interrupted.

[Translation]

It is an honour for me to present this petition on behalf of Canadians *a mari usque ad mare*, who are against aborting female fetuses.

[English]

In doing so, I join the petitioners who want to put an end to the three deadliest words in the world “It's a girl.”

CBC/RADIO CANADA

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by hundreds of petitioners from across Canada.

The petitioners are concerned about funding to CBC. They feel it is very important, especially for CBC Radio in both languages, that there be national, regional and local programming to underscore our shared national consciousness and identity.

The petitioners also comment that the \$1 billion that Canada invests in the CBC results in over \$4 billion in economic benefit to the country.

I am very pleased to present this petition on behalf of petitioners from Thunder Bay and across Canada.

PENSIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition that is signed by many residents of Winnipeg North dealing with Canada's pension programs: OAS, GIS and CPP. They make up a critical part of Canada's social safety net and provide the basic needs to hundreds of thousands of residents here in Canada.

Ultimately, the petitioners further believe that people should be able to continue to have the option to retire at the age of 65, and that the government not in any way diminish the importance and value of Canada's three major senior programs.

● (1525)

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Ms. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition signed by many constituents calling for tougher laws for those convicted of impaired driving causing death, and a redefinition of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by residents of my constituency of Saanich—Gulf Islands calling for measures to be taken to ensure that Canadians know about the safety and content of the products they use for personal health as well as food safety, giving Canadians, as consumers, the right to know what is in the products.

TERRORISM

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition, from petitioners in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and particularly in the Ottawa area, calling on the Government of Canada to conduct a parliamentary review into the events that occurred in the United States on September 11.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions on behalf of British Columbians who want to acknowledge that current impaired driving laws are too lenient.

The citizens of Canada want to see tougher laws and the implementation of new mandatory minimum sentencing for those persons convicted of impaired driving causing death. They also want to see the Criminal Code of Canada changed to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 749 and 751 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

Routine Proceedings

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 749—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With respect to the Action Plan to Address Family Violence and Violent Crimes Against Aboriginal Women and Girls mentioned by the Minister of Status of Women and found on the Status of Women Canada's Website: (a) what is the definition of the word "community" as used; (b) what is the definition of the word "aboriginal" as used; (c) how much of the funding mentioned in the Action Plan was announced for the first time in the Action Plan; (d) what criteria were used to justify the funding granted through the Action Plan; (e) what consultation was conducted in order to create the Action Plan, (i) who was the consultation conducted with, (ii) what are the details of any records or documents pertaining to these consultations; (f) how much of the overall funding discussed in the Action Plan is reserved exclusively for (i) First Nations peoples, (ii) Inuit peoples, (iii) Metis peoples; (g) how will the funding and programs mentioned in the Action Plan specifically include or exclude First Nations, Inuit and Metis regardless of residence; (h) how will Inuit, Metis and First Nations fairly benefit from funds and programs promised in the Action Plan; (i) what criteria will be used to ensure fair distribution; (j) what are the expected outcomes and outputs of the Community Safety Plans, (i) how do organizations, individuals, First Nations or communities apply for funding, (ii) how are funding recipients expected to account for that funding, (iii) what studies have been done to assess what resources will be needed in order to apply for and account for that funding, (iv) how was the need for this amount of funding determined; (k) what are the expected outcomes and outputs of the funding allocated to Justice Canada in order to "break intergenerational cycles of violence and abuse"; (l) how do organizations, individuals, First Nations or communities apply for this funding, (ii) how are funding recipients expected to account for that funding, (iii) what studies have been done to assess what resources will be needed in order to apply for and account for that funding, (iv) when will this funding be made available, (v) how was the need for this amount of funding determined; (l) what are the expected outcomes and outputs of the funding secured for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC)'s Family Violence Prevention Program, (i) how do organizations, individuals, First Nations or communities apply for this funding, (ii) how are funding recipients expected to account for that funding, (iii) what studies have been done to assess what resources will be needed in order to apply for and account for that funding, (iv) when will this funding be made available, (v) how was the need for this amount of funding determined; (m) what are the expected outcomes and outputs of the new 5 million dollars over 5 years secured for Status of Women Canada, (i) how do organizations, individuals, First Nations or communities apply for this funding, (ii) how are funding recipients expected to account for that funding, (iii) what studies have been done to assess what resources will be needed in order to apply for and account for that funding, (iv) when will this funding be made available, (v) is this funding to be distributed through the existing Women's Program, (vi) will this funding be renewable after two years, (vii) will this funding include projects pertaining to research or advocacy, (viii) how will this funding be distributed fairly among First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, (ix) how was the need for this amount of funding determined; (n) of the 241 million dollars invested in the On-Reserve Income Assistance program, what percentage of this funding was allocated to women, (i) what gender-based analysis has been conducted for this program, (ii) how much of this funding was made available to Inuit, (iii) how much of this funding was made available to Metis peoples, (iv) how much of this funding was made available to First Nations; (o) what are the expected outcomes and outputs of the 1 million dollars secured for Status of Women Canada's Women's Program, (i) how do organizations, individuals, First Nations or communities apply for this funding, (ii) how are funding recipients expected to account for that funding, (iii) what studies have been done to assess what resources will be needed in order to apply for and account for that funding, (iv) when will this funding be made available, (v) how was the need for this amount of funding determined; (p) what are the expected outcomes and outputs of the 1.5 million dollars secured for Justice Canada to support Aboriginal Victims Family Violence Prevention Program, (i) how do organizations, individuals, First Nations or communities apply for this funding, (ii) how are funding recipients expected to account for that funding, (iii) what studies have been done to assess what resources will be needed in order to apply for and account for that funding, (iv) when will this funding be made available, (v) how was the need for this amount of funding determined; (q) how much money did the government spend on the Family Violence Prevention Program of AANDC between 2010 and 2015; (r) what are the expected outcomes and outputs of the 158.7 million dollars secured for the Family Violence Prevention Program of AANDC, (i) how do organizations, individuals, First Nations or communities apply for this funding, (ii) how are funding recipients expected to

account for that funding, (iii) what studies have been done to assess what resources will be needed in order to apply for and account for that funding, (iv) when will this funding be made available, (v) how was the need for this funding determined; (s) what are the expected outcomes and outputs of the 18.5 million dollars that will directly support shelters, (i) how do shelters receive this funding, (ii) how are shelters expected to account for that funding, (iii) will this funding be made available to build new shelters, (iv) what percentage of this funding will be accessible to Inuit, (v) what percentage of this funding will be accessible to Metis, (vi) how much of this funding will be allocated to each reservation, (vii) how was the need for this amount of funding determined; and (t) how much funding did on-reserve shelters receive yearly from 2010 to 2015?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 751—Mr. Paul Dewar:

With regard to the government's commitment on July 3, 2013, to accept 1,300 Syrian refugees: (a) how many Syrians have been granted refugee status in Canada since July 3, 2013; (b) how many Syrian refugees have been admitted to Canada from overseas since July 3, 2013, broken down by (i) total amount, (ii) month; (c) how many of the Syrian refugees admitted to Canada from overseas since July 3, 2013 have been government-sponsored, broken down by (i) total amount, (ii) month; (d) how many of the Syrian refugees admitted to Canada from overseas since July 3, 2013 have been privately-sponsored, broken down by (i) total amount, (ii) month; (e) of the government-sponsored Syrian refugees admitted to Canada from overseas since July 3, 2013, how many were admitted from (i) Syria, (ii) Iraq, (iii) Jordan, (iv) Lebanon, (v) Turkey, (vi) elsewhere; (f) of the privately-sponsored Syrian refugees admitted to Canada from overseas since July 3, 2013, how many were admitted from (i) Syria, (ii) Iraq, (iii) Jordan, (iv) Lebanon, (v) Turkey, (vi) elsewhere; (g) of the privately-sponsored Syrian refugees admitted to Canada from overseas since July 3, 2013, how many were sponsored by (i) sponsorship agreement holders, (ii) groups of five, (iii) community sponsors; (h) how many applications to privately sponsor Syrian refugees have been received by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, broken down by (i) total amount, (ii) sponsorship agreement holders, (iii) groups of five, (iv) community sponsors; (i) how many applications were received on behalf of Syrians seeking refugee status in Canada, from (i) January 1, 2011 to July 3, 2013, (ii) July 3, 2013 to present; (j) of the Syrians granted refugee status in Canada since July 3, 2013, how many applied from within Canada; (k) of the applications received on behalf of Syrians seeking refugee status in Canada, how many remain in progress, dating from (i) January 1, 2011 to July 3, 2013, (ii) July 3, 2013 to present; (l) what is the average processing time for applications received from January 1, 2011 until July 3, 2013, on behalf of Syrians seeking refugee status in Canada, broken down by (i) overall time, (ii) privately-sponsored refugee applicants, (iii) government-sponsored refugee applicants; (m) what is the average processing time for all applications received from January 1, 2011 until July 3, 2013, on behalf of individuals seeking refugee status in Canada, broken down by (i) overall time, (ii) privately-sponsored refugee applicants, (iii) government-sponsored refugee applicants; (n) what is the average processing time for applications received since July 3, 2013, on behalf of Syrians seeking refugee status in Canada, broken down by (i) overall time, (ii) privately-sponsored refugee applicants, (iii) government-sponsored refugee applicants; (o) what is the average processing time for all applications received since July 3, 2013, on behalf of individuals seeking refugee status in Canada, broken down by (i) overall time, (ii) privately-sponsored refugee applicants, (iii) government-sponsored refugee applicants?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Business of Supply

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House: (a) the next federal election should be the last conducted under the current first-past-the-post electoral system which has repeatedly delivered a majority of seats to parties supported by a minority of voters, or under any other winner-take-all electoral system; and (b) a form of mixed-member proportional representation would be the best electoral system for Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Today being the last allotted day for the supply period ending December 10, 2014, the House will proceed as usual to the consideration and passage of the appropriation bills.

In view of recent procedures, do hon. members agree to have the bills distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

Mr. Craig Scott: Mr. Speaker, I should start by saying that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent.

This motion is intended to put our parliamentary democracy on the right track by fixing what is an extremely unfair electoral system. Every voter counts equally, from a philosophical perspective, so every vote should count equally within our electoral system. Unfortunately, the current system does not do that.

Allow me to quote a former highly respected MP who everyone knows has the health of our parliamentary democracy at heart and first in mind:

Why not turn the theory of representative government into reality? Legislatures that reflect citizens' values, in proportion to how we vote in elections, can help make balance, moderation, diversity, inclusiveness, and maturity the refreshing new hallmarks of Canadian [parliamentary] democracy.

That was from J. Patrick Boyer, Progressive Conservative MP for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, 1984 to 1993.

Paragraph (a) in the motion says:

...the next federal election should be the last conducted under the current first-past-the-post electoral system which has repeatedly delivered a majority of seats

to parties supported by a minority of voters, or under any other winner-take-all electoral system;

Paragraph (a) is designed to attract a consensus of MPs affirming that our current system, a winner-take-all system of first past the post, must go.

Many, if not most, Canadians do not actually know that our system produces huge distortions.

There are three kinds of majorities that emerge from an election in Canada: false ones, arbitrary ones, and inflated ones.

The false majority is the biggest concern. A party may receive well less than 50% of the vote but end up with well over 50% of the seats. When Canadians hear about a landslide victory or a government getting a majority government, many, if not the majority of Canadians, do not know that this means only seat count. It does not mean that the governing party received 50% of support. In 2011, the current government, not the first but probably the 20th since Confederation, came into power on these terms: it had 39.5% of the national popular vote and 54% of the seats. Another example is the Progressive Conservatives in 1988, who with 57% of the seats had only 43% of the votes. Those were the Mulroney years. The next year, the Liberals came in. They had 60% of the seats with 41% of the vote. Do members know what happened? The Progressive Conservatives went from 169 seats to two seats. They received 16% of the national vote and received less than 1% of the seats in the House of Commons.

This is not a partisan thing. NDP governments across the country in provincial governments have also benefited from our wonky system. The NDP under former premier Bob Rae received 57% of the seats with under 38% of the vote.

It can get arbitrary, as well. For example, in Quebec, in 1998, the PQ won 60% of the seats with 43% of the vote, despite the Liberals actually getting 43.5% of the vote.

Inflated majorities are common. Even in the situation where a party manages to get over 50% of the vote in a province, usually where there are only two parties, it can end with the ridiculous result that a party gets all or almost all of the seats. In 1987, under our system, 60% of the votes for the Liberals in New Brunswick produced 100% of the seats; 58 out of 58 seats for that entire period were in the hands of one party. Forty per cent of the electorate was shut out from representation in that legislature. In B.C., in 2001, 58% of the vote produced, for another Liberal Party, 77 out of 79 seats: 97%.

This is fundamentally unfair, quite obviously, not to mention, frankly, absurd. However, this unfairness is not the only consequence. Our voting system has knock-on effects, what I would call pathologies, that undermine the health of our entire democracy, from how Parliament works to citizen engagement.

I would simply like to go through a few of those problems. I will list them, because in debate, I can go into them in more detail.

● (1530)

Here are eight problems.

Business of Supply

One, our system produces a false sense and exacerbation of regional differences. We almost get, for decades and decades, only Conservative MPs from Alberta. It creates the idea that somehow Alberta is monolithically a Conservative province. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Two, it diminishes the diversity of viewpoints in Parliament, especially from different areas of the country. We never hear from a rich range of voices from many provinces because of that problem of regional exacerbation.

Three, it promotes majorities in the House of Commons such that, because of our system in which the Prime Minister has so much power in an executive embedded in the legislature, if the Prime Minister and the government are of a mind, the views of 60% of the electorate, having elected only 40% of the opposition MPs, do not have to be taken into account. Legislation can be rammed through if a government is so minded.

Four, there is an under-representation of women in our system.

Five, adversarialism and hyperpartisanship are emphasized over co-operation and compromise in legislative activity.

Six, the chances of poor legislation because tunnel vision and single ideologies, which do not have to grapple with other points of view on the floor of the House and in committees, also can dominate.

Seven, citizen frustration goes through the roof, and it is one of the contributions to lower voter turnout.

Eight, the role of MPs is undermined due to the fact that in our system, voters have to choose, with one vote, the local representative they would like to have representing their constituency and the party they would like to see with the most seats in the House of Commons, and quite often, they are choosing one other factor, which is which party leader they prefer.

All of these things, under a properly structured proportional representation system, would be dealt with.

What is the NDP advocating? Let me start by quoting from Tom Mulcair, the leader of the official opposition, the member for Outremont, who said a year and a half ago:

Electoral reform is an important way to reinvigorate our democracy, and in 2015 New Democrats will be seeking a mandate to introduce a proportional-representation voting system that better reflects the true political preferences of Canadians. We are committed to ensuring that 2015 is the last unfair election.

Only last week, we deepened that commitment by explaining how we would form a special all-party task force upon becoming government and then would legislate to a deadline that would produce a proportional-representation system of a mixed sort by 2019.

It is important to note that NDP conventions over the years have emphasized “that mixed-member proportional representation must be adapted to Canada”. The fact is that we have examples. New Zealand, Germany, and Scotland are three healthy democracies we will be borrowing from. The fact of the matter is that the lessons they have learned have to be applied in a way that takes into account Canadian realities.

It is important as well to note that we are intent on not reinventing the wheel. Here in Canada, much work has been done over the decades on mixed-proportional representation as the best proportional representation system for Canada. Eight out of nine commissions or citizen assemblies created by governments in the last dozen years in Canada have not only advocated getting rid of our first-past-the-post system but have advocated adopting MMP, or mixed-member-proportional representation.

What is mixed-member proportional representation? The way I like to talk about it is as three pairs that are married into a rather harmonious whole. It is much simpler than people think.

I would start by saying that two principles are merged. One is the principle that voters in each local constituency or riding should be able to elect a single MP directly accountable to them. That is our current system. The second is that voters in each constituency should also have their party preference directly count so that party representation in the House of Commons, that is the seats, the number of MPs, is proportionate to the degree of support the party actually received in the national vote.

Let me now take the voter into the voting booth. This is how voters will understand how easy this is.

These two principles are merged by giving voters two votes. Let us call it a one ballot, two votes approach. Under the first vote, on a single ballot, citizens elect a single local MP to represent their riding. With the second vote, they vote for a candidate, on a list, of the party they prefer. It is this second vote that tells us the number of seats each party should get in the House of Commons, and then from the list, MPs go to the House of Commons, join their local MPs, and voila, we have a much-reformed system that would get rid of all of the pathologies I listed that are part of our current system.

● (1535)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the member opposite on this issue of democratic reform. I know he has worked long on this issue over many years.

I want to make a comment. Let us say that we move to mixed proportional representation as a system of voting. We would end up with a House of Commons with some 300 members of Parliament. Let us say that 200 of those members of Parliament would be local members of Parliament representing local geographic districts across country. We would have another 100 members of Parliament who would be selected by the parties themselves, based on the percentage of the popular vote each party received in the general election.

Currently, however, section 67 of the Canada Elections Act gives party leaders the final determination as to who party candidates will be.

What we would in effect have is a system in which party leaders would have the final say on these 100 MPs, making them beholden to the party leaders and not to any other group or constituency here in this country.

I note that Bill C-586, the reform act, would remove that statutory requirement for the party leader's endorsement.

Business of Supply

I wonder if the member would comment on the relationship of that bill to the NDP's opposition supply day motion.

• (1540)

Mr. Craig Scott: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate where the question is coming from.

First, it is important to clarify the premise, which is that under the system we are talking about, there would be no appointing by party leaders of the MPs. Each party would have an internal process that would have to be transparently revealed to Canadians as to how they ended up with a list of MPs from which people could go to Parliament.

Under the system we would advocate, individual voters could actually go into the list and say, "That is the order the party set, but I do not prefer that order. I prefer this person to move up in the order."

It is very important to note that there would not be an appointment system. It would depend on how each party set up its list so voters could determine how that would influence their vote.

On the second point, absolutely, the idea that the whole question of a direct appointment by a single leader of any MP, let alone all these MPs, is anti-democratic. I would actually say that our current system does not actually have an appointment power; it has a power requirement, under the Canada Elections Act, to sign off on local nominations. It is not quite the same thing.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the member has it all figured out.

What the NDP is suggesting today is something that was debated and voted on in P.E.I and in Ontario, where both populations said no to it.

I even understand that there were a number of New Democratic MPPs in Ontario who actually campaigned against this particular proposal.

A bit of a surprise is that a lot of people, including me, favour electoral reform. However, what is a bit hard to understand is why the NDP has taken such a narrow approach to electoral reform to the degree that it has endorsed one plan. I do not think Fair Vote and other organizations would want to see that. They would like to see a more open approach to dealing with electoral reform.

Mr. Craig Scott: Mr. Speaker, it is called leadership.

It is also the case that the hon. member should not be invoking Fair Vote, knowing full well that his party does not support proportional representation, which is the mandate of Fair Vote. That is the second point.

The third point is that MMP, mixed-member proportional representation, is a proven system in three healthy democracies. It is also confirmed by eight out of nine commissions or government-initiated processes in this country. This is where the consensus is.

We are taking a leadership role in this and saying, "This is the system. We will implement the system. We are inviting you to join us. Now is the time. Now is the chance."

This could amount to pre-electoral co-operation on behalf of parties that truly believe in electoral reform. That includes

proportional representation. Alternative vote, or preferential balloting, standing on its own, is a regressive reform.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): We are going to resume debate. It seems that there will be considerable interest in the questions and comments portion this afternoon, so I would ask members to keep most of their questions and comments and responses as brief as they possibly can so more members can participate.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my speech by thanking my colleague from Toronto—Danforth from the bottom of my heart for moving this motion and for bringing this extremely important debate to us today.

As I have said many times as the official opposition deputy critic for democratic reform, it is absolutely essential to have a debate on our electoral system and on the way we elect MPs, the representatives of the people.

I understand that people may not necessarily be interested in this idea, or that it is not necessarily one of their priorities. However, I think it is extremely important to talk about our electoral system and the way we choose who will lead our country because everything else flows from there. If the power is in the hands of an individual who does not share the values of the majority of the population, then it is in everyone's best interest to have the most representative and most democratic system possible.

It is no secret that voter turnout in Canada has declined and that cynicism continues to grow. People have little confidence in politicians and we cannot really blame them. The current system has failed us many times. This broken system is a relic of days gone by and not well suited to the reality of the 21st century.

Our first-past-the-post system gives all the power to a majority government even though it does not have the support of the majority of the people.

What we are proposing is to implement a mixed member proportional system, whereby some members would be directly elected to represent a certain area of Canada—which is presently the case—and other members would be elected on the basis of the proportion of votes received by their party in the election.

My colleague from Toronto—Danforth had started to explain this in more detail. The idea is that we would vote twice on one ballot. People would first vote for the person they want to represent their riding. Then they would vote for a candidate on a list who belongs to the party they prefer. The person chosen would represent the voters and also the party in Parliament.

Thus, no one who goes to vote will be able to say that his vote will not count. That is the very basis of voter participation. I can even give a very concrete and personal example. In 2006, voter turnout in the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent, which I represent, was approximately 60%. The member who represented the riding before me often got elected by a strong majority of over 50%, and so in 2006 and 2008, voter turnout in my riding remained stagnant at 60%.

Business of Supply

When I campaigned in 2008, many people told me that there was no point in voting because they knew that my predecessor was going to win. They said that it would not change anything if they voted for another party. Voting was not important to them because they did not believe that it would change the outcome of the election.

What happened? In 2011, people saw that things were changing and that there was a new movement. They realized that their vote could make a difference this time. There was a 10% increase in voter turnout in my riding alone. Voter turnout increased from 60% to 70%, one of the highest rates in Canada. That is huge and that is a very real example.

• (1545)

When people realize that their vote can make a difference and that they can influence what their government and Parliament look like, they will vote.

In the system we are proposing, people will vote for the person that represents their geographic area. Meanwhile, their other vote will count because every vote will add up and the percentage of people who voted for a given party will change the makeup of the House.

The example that is often given is the Green Party. Many people across Canada support that party. However, when it comes time to vote in each riding, the party receives only small pockets of support across the country. Why are the people who voted for this party not able to be represented in the House of Commons? Why is it problematic for every vote to be reflected in our Parliament? In my opinion, that is the best way to do it.

In September 2013, I had the opportunity to participate in a very interesting conference in Orillia called “Make your vote count”. I was joined by the leader of the Green Party as well as a representative from the Liberal Party, and we had a wonderful multi-party discussion on how to make very vote count in Canada. There were all kinds of workshops and discussions over the weekend on how to help Canadians regain their faith in our political system.

We kept coming back to one idea: if we truly want Canadians to think that their vote counts and if we truly want them to go out to vote on election day because they believe it will make a difference, we need to introduce proportionality into our electoral system. We have no choice.

When we look at the makeup of the House of Commons, which is meant to reflect the Canadian public, since we are here as representatives of the people, it is clear that women and young people are under-represented. Although the NDP is one of the youngest caucuses in the history of Canada, young people are still under-represented here.

People everywhere are amazed at the fact that NDP MPs are so young, but the Canadian population has a greater proportion of young people than our caucus does. That goes to show that the 308 MPs are not yet representative enough.

Implementing mixed proportional representation could help in terms of representation of women, young people, cultural groups and sexual minorities—so many things. I do not see why anyone would oppose this other than for partisan reasons. Some people might think

that it is easier for a party to get a majority and hold power without trying to collaborate with others or to think of ways to encourage people to go out and vote and participate in our democracy as much as possible, instead of scaring them and telling them to stay home.

Our voting process has not changed since the 19th century. Our position is clear. The NDP is committed to integrating proportional representation into our system to renew people's interest. The NDP wants to make Canada a truly 21st-century country, a country where the democratic discussion will ensure representation, stability and effectiveness. That is our firm commitment.

What can Canadians expect from the two old parties? Nothing but schemes and excuses. The old parties seem to think they are the state. They have been telling us for ages that they—not anyone else—are the state.

New Democrats are citizens first. We are people of our time who care much more about Canadian democracy than our political party. We want to act on behalf of the fairer and more representative Canada of the future.

It is not just our duty; it is the duty of us all.

• (1550)

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent and I serve on committee together. I admire her work and how hard she works as a member of Parliament. However, I think she just put me in a class of old guys. I may fit, but I do not like it.

I have a bit of a problem. I love her dearly, but I do not like the solution she offers. If proportional representation means we have to appoint people off a list of party hacks to fill a role, after other people have gone out and worked very hard, as I have done four times, to win a seat, to come here because they are a favourite of a leader, or a party official and they are on a list, just makes it wrong.

Who represents the constituent back home? Is it the fellow or the woman who worked very hard to become the constituent politician, or the person appointed off the party list, the party hack?

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. He does a fine job as committee chair, and it is always a pleasure working with him.

I would like to explain more clearly how the system works. First, Canadians will always be able to vote for an MP to represent their area of the country.

Closed lists are not the only option. What we are proposing is an open list that would allow people to vote directly for the candidates they prefer. We have to trust that the public is capable of choosing the best candidates to represent them.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Trinity—Spadina, I am proud to represent the only provincial district in Ontario that voted for proportional representation in 2007. We had to fight the NDP very hard to get that put in place. However, the prevailing thought of the province was not to go in this direction because of the vagaries of the system.

I just listened to the presentation made by the hon. member and I understand there are more details to the proportional representation proposal than are currently in the motion in front of us. For example, there is the list of 100 people. However, if majority rule is the problem that prevents accurate reflection of the general population inside the House, how would a list that does not set aside specific seats for a region over a national interest, or women over men, or perhaps even a selection from our aboriginal first nations people to make ensure their voice, like in New Zealand, is protected and heard inside the House, solve that problem?

The members have all these details. They have not shared the details with the House, yet they have a very prescribed way of getting to a list of 100 people and allowing the majority to choose. How would they ensure that minorities would get a voice in the House if they are subjected to majority rule, once again, through the proposed system?

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina for his question.

We are not saying that this plan is completely fleshed out and set in stone. We are just saying that closed lists are not the only option.

In a mixed member proportional system, there is the possibility of adjusting various parameters in order to determine what best represents Canada. There is a way to strike a balance between regional representation and proportional representation of parties, so that each party is able to present more representative candidates. It would not be very difficult.

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I need to correct the record. My good friend from Trinity—Spadina was in error when he said that only his riding voted in favour of a previous vote on proportional representation. I would like to reassure him that the good citizens of Parkdale—High Park, where we have two strong NDP members provincially and federally, also voted in favour of proportional representation.

My question for my colleague is the following. The hyper-partisanship of the House so often turns off Canadians to politics and leads to the dialogue of the deaf in many cases. Would she not agree that systems of proportional representation, like MMP, the system that the NDP has proposed, which exists in Germany and has a coalition right now of social democrats and conservatives who are able to work together and find common ground, reduce partisanship and lead to better governance for citizens?

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her excellent question.

I want to take this opportunity to boast a bit. *Maclean's* named me runner-up in the most collegial MP category two weeks ago and, as such, I really do not like partisanship. I find that, far too often, it completely poisons our debates.

As my colleague said, one of the positive effects of a mixed member proportional system is that it curbs rhetoric and partisanship and forces the parties to get along, converse and try to find common ground, instead of always focusing on their differences.

• (1600)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I give a special thanks to the member who raised this motion and has given us the opportunity to discuss our democracy and various ideas on how to improve it.

In order to talk about this proposal, we need to discuss the broader context of the debate. I will start with the broad strokes of Canadian democracy, recognizing that everything great that has been achieved in this country has been done through gradual, incremental improvement, starting 800 years ago with the Magna Carta, whose anniversary we will celebrate next year.

I will not go through each of the 800 years, but I will state that in 1867 we actually got a country. It was not until 1931 that we got an independent foreign policy through the Statute of Westminster, and it was not until 125 years after Confederation that we got constitutional independence with the Constitution Act of that year.

There have been instances with the Statute of Westminster where the British mother country actually offered us more independence than we were prepared to accept, which really speaks to the temperamentally conservative approach that Canadians had always taken to the evolution of their democracy. We have built on that approach by making some important incremental improvements in our democracy under the leadership of the present-day Prime Minister.

For example, in this Parliament under this Conservative majority, we have passed more private members' bills than any other government since 1972. Private members' bills are proposed by backbench members of Parliament, not by the government, and they are supported by this government to pass into law. The last time as many passed was 1972, when a large number were simply for riding name changes. In this case we are talking about substantive legislative changes that have done everything from protect vulnerable people from sex trafficking to cracking down on crime, to countless other measures that improve the daily lives of Canadian citizens.

Second, we have allowed vastly more free votes than was case during previous majority governments. Free votes are when members of a given caucus can decide how they want to vote regardless of what their party leadership tells them to do.

Business of Supply

Indeed, *The Globe and Mail*, along with Samara Canada, a group that studies democracy, looked at 162 individually cast votes on the floor of the House of Commons and concluded that the Conservative caucus was far more likely, during the two-year period under examination, to have members vote independently from their leadership than any other caucus in the House of Commons.

The Liberals voted as a unanimous block 90% of the time. In the two-year period under examination, the NDP voted as a unanimous block 100% of the time.

In one in four votes cast in this House of Commons, the Conservatives had a member stand up and vote differently from the party leadership. Statistically speaking, our members have been proven to be far more independent from their leadership, and our leadership has far less control over our caucus, than is the case in other parties.

We have also seen ideological litmus tests on the other side, with the NDP saying that anyone who opposes the long gun registry should be removed from caucus. That happened to one member of Parliament from northern Ontario. The Liberal leader said he would ban anyone who disagreed with him on the subject of abortion.

These sorts of hardline ideological litmus tests that ban anyone with a different point of view are a foreign concept in the Conservative caucus, which is, as I have said, far more open. That speaks to the culture of the caucus in the government of the present day, but let us talk about the legislative initiatives.

• (1605)

First, we passed the Fair Representation Act, which gives fast growing provinces—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Craig Scott: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think this is so obvious that it does not need any articulation.

Are we going to have context-setting right up until the end of 10 minutes? The member has not addressed a word to the motion and the context of the motion. He has said nothing but sing the praises of the Conservative Party. I honestly do not believe this is relevant.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I appreciate the intervention by the member for Toronto—Danforth. The minister is only about a quarter of the way through the time he has allocated for his remarks today, so on points of relevance one first has to hear what he has said before one can make a decision explicitly on that.

The topic before the House today concerns matters of democratic reform. I am sure that the hon. Minister of State for Democratic Reform is working in his preamble toward coming around to addressing the question before the House. We will give him a bit more time to do that, which I am sure he will do in due course.

The hon. Minister of State for Democratic Reform.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, in setting the context, I will take just a few moments to elaborate on an important piece of legislation on democratic reform that he and I both debated, the Fair Elections Act, which requires people to present ID when they vote, a new requirement in Canadian elections that has removed the largely

inaccurate voter information card as a form of ID. It has brought in independent investigations so that an investigator can look into potential violations of the Canada election law without any interference from either a party or Elections Canada itself.

We got rid of the ban on the early transmission of election results, which was no longer practical in the modern-day environment. In this country, we used to ban anyone reporting the election results on the east coast before the end of the election on the west coast, something that is possible in the modern era of technology.

We cracked down further on the power and influence of big money by closing the loans loophole that some politicians had used to get around donation limits and by banning dead donors, that is to say, people dying and leaving in their wills donations that were vastly larger than the donation limit, effectively allowing people to do in death what they were prohibited from doing in life. We got rid of dead donors in the Fair Elections Act. It was the biggest remake of our election laws in well over a decade and, according to publicly released polling data, has been overwhelmingly popular with Canadians.

That is a short summary of the context in which we enter the debate on the proposal for a proportional representation system in Canada.

One thing that I have always admired about our existing system as distinct from the proportional one proposed by the NDP is that each member in this place is accountable to an individual constituency and there is not a single square inch in Canada that does not have an MP. Therefore, no matter where people live or who they are, they have members of Parliament that they help hire or fire every four years. That person is responsible to go back to their geographic area and represent its interests and values on a continuing basis.

With a proportional system, that direct connection between a member of Parliament and citizens is obscured at best, and broken at worst. In fact, this place is called the “Commons” because it represents the common people. Its colour is green because the early commoners actually met in fields. They almost always represented a geographic area and would take to the fields with the values and interests of the commoners they represented. Over time, that has evolved into this very sophisticated and well-entrenched system of responsible government that relies on members of Parliament whose jobs are given and taken by the voters in their communities, and we have been very well served in this country by that system.

Proportional representation, by contrast, would inevitably lead to unstable and risky coalition governments that are constantly falling and re-emerging. That would break the stability that Canadians have come to expect and demand from their governments.

Business of Supply

Canadians have clearly rejected coalition government. It was not so long ago, back in late 2008, that the NDP and Liberals joined with the separatist Bloc Québécois with the aim of forming a coalition government against the wishes of the electorate and the outcome of an election that had been held only a few days earlier. They came very close to forming a government by way of this coalition. It was not until a massive, potentially unprecedented backlash that they were forced to retreat from that plan and allow the winning party to govern the country.

• (1610)

There is no question that if Canadians return a Conservative minority in the next election, that coalition would re-establish itself and attempt as a coalition to take power that it was not able to secure via a direct election.

Instead of using the proposed change to the electoral system to achieve that coalition government, the Liberals and New Democrats should be honest in the coming election if a coalition is their intention. I think that NDP and Liberal candidates should go door to door and explain their plan for a coalition after the next election and let Canadians decide if they want that. If Canadians vote for it, that is one thing, but what they should not face is a group of parties pretending to run independently from one another and then, after the election is over and the decision is out of the grasp of voters, doing something entirely different, as was the case in late 2008.

If we look at the quality of life that we enjoy in Canada, we see that no matter what measurement we take on an international scale, the success of Canadian democracy in representing the values and interests of the people is really unsurpassed anywhere in the world. We have inherited the greatest democratic system in the world, which is parliamentary democracy. Regardless of where people come from around the world, they can cherish this democratic institution that we inherited from the British parliamentary tradition. Our success is entirely founded on all of the attributes that this system brings. It brings responsible government, common law, limited government, and economic freedom, all of the basic pillars of a free society that have allowed countries throughout our civilization to enjoy so much prosperity and well-being.

I look forward to working with members across the way to build on the success of that great tradition. Hopefully, day by day and step by step, we will make Canada's democracy even better.

• (1615)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to thank the minister for his comments on this matter. Yes, he has brought forward a number of changes to the electoral system, which Canadians were very upset about and expressed their disdain for. Some of them we are able to beat back, but not others.

I am disappointed that the minister chose not to discuss whatsoever the motion before the House today. He speaks of responsible government. I would remind him that my ancestor, a Father of Confederation from New Brunswick, reluctantly became a Father of Confederation because he wanted responsible government in this country.

Doug Bailie, president of Fair Vote Canada, has soundly supported proportional representation. He said that it is not a system, but a principle. He says that it better supports our system of responsible government by better ensuring the majority in this House reflects that majority of voters.

If I look at the outcome in Alberta, as a member previously mentioned, I see that in the last election, Conservatives won 66.8% of the vote but 96% of the seats. The NDP received 16.8% of the vote and only 4% of the seats. Saskatchewan is even more skewed. The Conservatives won 56% of the vote but 93% of the seats.

How, then, does the minister think that his system, which he says he is willing to amend, will better represent the views of Canadians? How can he speak against the reforms that we are bringing forward?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I did address those arguments in my speech. First of all, I believe that the system we have of first past the post has given Canada good, stable, democratic government. It is government that Canadians are comfortable with.

In fact, when proposals similar to the one that the NDP has put before us were offered in referendums in British Columbia, Ontario, and P.E.I., all of them were rejected by the voters. There was a member across the way from the Liberal Party who pointed out that it was only in one riding in all of Ontario that electors voted in favour of this proportional system that the NDP is now proposing.

Canadians do not consider this proposal to be a priority. They want us to use our existing democratic system to focus on jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity. With our low-tax plan, that is exactly what we are doing.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am listening very attentively to the discussion in the House of Commons because I think all of us want to see some democratic reform. It is what we are hearing in our constituencies.

I appreciate the efforts of many members of Parliament to put forward different options for reform, but is this what Canadians want? Have we really consulted with Canadians? We know that what is being proposed today has been rejected by a number of ridings and provinces across Canada already.

I have a question for the government member. Will the government support consultation on democratic reform for Canadians, so that we can hear what they want and how they want to reform our system? Is the government prepared to do that?

Also, is the motion before us today a free vote for government members? Are they voting as members of Parliament, or are they voting as a government?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the question was about consultation.

The member correctly points out that this particular proposal has received some consultation in three provinces. It was rejected by referendum by the people of British Columbia, Ontario, and P.E.I.

Business of Supply

I note that the motion does not actually call for a referendum. It just calls for the politicians in this place to impose this new system on Canadians through a single vote in the House of Commons, which I think is in itself undemocratic.

Over here, we are not planning structural changes of this nature. Instead, our focus is on keeping taxes low and helping families get ahead. A new family tax cut and an increased universal child care benefit combined will give the average Canadian family with kids an extra \$1,200 a year that they can spend on the priorities that matter to them. That will go to 100% of the families who have children in this country, meaning that four million families will be better off.

Part of a democracy is letting Canadians vote on these types of proposals, and that is what they will be able to do in the next election.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns I have with respect to the New Democrats' motion is that it might lead to the further concentration of power in party leaders' offices.

This has long been a concern of mine. Parties and party leaders currently control the process of party nominations. Without reform of this process of party nominations, my worry is that in a mixed-member proportional representation system in which a number of MPs are selected by the parties themselves, we could see a further concentration of power in party leaders. I think that would weaken this House and the very principles of responsible government.

• (1620)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the member makes a very good point. Recently he identified what I believe is a flaw in the Canada Elections Act.

The flaw he identified was that a leader must personally sign off on the candidacy of every single person who runs for his or her party. That ensures that under the law, parties do not have the choice to select who within their organization would be best suited to approve candidacies. That is something the member has sought to fix with his proposed reform act, which is under examination at committee.

I congratulate the member on his work on that. He is quite right that the proposal from the NDP would actually further concentrate the power of party leaders and backroom party operators. That is the opposite of what we want to achieve in our democracy.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is really important that we clear up some of what is amounting to misinformation. I will not call it disinformation.

The system of mixed-member proportional representation is not the classic list proportional representation with candidates appointed by central parties. It is nothing like that.

We are talking about the example that was set out by the Law Commission of Canada, whereby local constituency MPs are elected exactly as is currently the case. Whatever the percentage is—it could be 60% or 65% of the House of the Commons that would be made up that way—everybody would have a local, directly accountable MP.

Then there would be regional MPs in the House of Commons to create the balance to make sure that the parties are represented

according to the popular vote. That is the system. Everybody would be elected, and on the second list people could determine who they want to vote for on the party list.

Everything that has been coming from the other side is already a mischaracterization from both sides. I wonder if my colleague, the minister, might want to clarify why he is not acknowledging that mixed-member proportional is not the kind of proportional representation system that he thought he was describing earlier.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the member acknowledges that there would have to be a list voted on by the citizen. However, that list has to be established somehow. Somebody has to put the list together. The party, the party apparatus, and party leaders would establish that list and give all of its priorities, so the vast majority of parliamentarians on that list would be the hand-picked selection of party leaders.

We do not do that in this party. We have locally nominated candidates who win the support of party members on the ground. That makes our party unique. The others have been exercising a heavy hand to shut down legitimate contestants in their nomination races. That is something we have avoided in the Conservative Party, and we are very proud of the democratic record of our Prime Minister.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member can indicate whether or not his caucus will be having a free vote on this issue, given the preamble to the speech that he just gave. Are the Conservatives in favour of having a free vote on the issue?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my earlier remarks, *The Globe and Mail* did a study on that exact question and concluded that among all of the parties in the House of Commons, the Conservative Party was by far the most likely to have free and independent votes. Out of 162,000 individual votes cast by MPs, we had far more MPs vote independently of leadership than the other parties, which is unusual, given that we are on the government side of the House of Commons.

I think this Prime Minister has shown his willingness to accept debate and a robust exchange of ideas even when they are not precisely aligned with his own. That is one of the reasons our government has been able to stay in such close contact with the values of everyday Canadians.

• (1625)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Québec, National Defence; the hon. member for Drummond, Environment.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windfall, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really enjoying this debate. We get to talk about democratic reform in a very precise manner.

Business of Supply

We are focusing on the one system that has been put forward in our country, which is talked about ad nauseam in many forums, not just in this country but around the world, and that is the MMP, mixed member proportional representation. However, I am surprised at how prescriptive the motion is.

I will read parts of the motion, and I want to illustrate to the House how important it is, such that countries around the world had this discussion, including Canadian provinces in the form of referendum. There were citizen assemblies created and referendums in New Zealand as well as in this country. The process was a long one and consulted dramatically. It consulted with an entire nation, or in our case, consulted with an entire province. Therefore, I find the motion a little too prescriptive.

Let us dissect the motion for a moment, starting with (a), as follows:

(a) the next federal election should be the last conducted under the current first-past-the-post electoral system which has repeatedly delivered a majority of seats to parties supported by a minority of voters, or under any other winner-take-all electoral system;

The critic from the NDP pointed out inflated majorities, and I agree with him. Numbers such as gaining 41% of the vote but getting 60% of the seats are troubling to all Canadians, and they want to rectify that. Therefore, when it comes (a), it sounds good to me. This is a good basis for a debate in which we can fix the problems with the system. Such was illustrated when the Progressive Conservatives went down to two seats but received a substantial amount of the vote. It becomes regional in nature, such as the first-past-the-post system, and therefore we need to fix that system in and of itself. I do not disagree with that whatsoever.

However, I find the second part quite surprising. It reads:

and; (b) a form of mixed-member proportional representation would be the best electoral system for Canada.

It begins with “and (b)”. I do not know if that is what is being recommended or if the NDP is proclaiming that it is the best one. Says who?

Personally, even if I did find this to be the best system, I could not say that without a full debate in the House. We are only here for a couple of hours. Let us take a look at the track record. Let us take a look at other systems.

Someone said that the people of British Columbia also turned it down. Actually, they voted on something else, the single transferable vote, which is a different system. Now we are talking about multi-member ridings, which is completely different.

I was shocked when I saw the consultation. I have talked with NDP members on many occasions, I have spoken to Fair Vote Canada, Fair Voting BC, and to the opponents of proportional representation and received their views on it. However, to me, it seems that I am only scratching the surface every time I do this, because there is so much more to discuss.

I am surprised, because when we had the Fair Elections Act, or unfair elections act, whatever members want to call it, when the minister brought that to the House and we passed it, I remember NDP members saying, unequivocally, that the one thing they did not like was the fact that it was overly prescriptive.

For example, when Elections Canada advertises, it likes to advertise to promote voting, to get more people to vote and get those numbers up. I agree with that. However, the government decided to take that away and have it advertise only the location, when and where, one could vote, and that is it. The NDP members said that this was overly prescriptive and we should not do that. Therefore, why are they forcing us to vote on just one system? It is one narrow system already turned down by other provinces. Why was it turned down by other provinces?

• (1630)

People in Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick would like to know because they have never faced this type of referendum before. There is so much to be talked about. To me, this sums up why we should have consultation.

One particular politician from Quebec said a year and a half ago in an interview:

The other thing that people have to understand is that even if it's not constitutional change per se, it is profound democratic change, and precisely because of that, it's not they type of thing that you can do either by just snapping your fingers the day after an election, or without profound consultation.

He further went on to say:

People have to be brought in. It's a little like any form of development — this is democratic development — and it has to be from the base up. People have to agree with it. You can't shove it down people's throats.

Who said that? The leader of the NDP.

This was not said several years ago. If he had said this about 20 years ago, I would understand, but he said this on May 7, 2013—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: He was the leader then.

Mr. Scott Simms: He was the leader then, Mr. Speaker. Why so prescriptive now?

We just heard some conflicting views about the fact that there was an open list based on regions, or not, according to the second member. It is prescriptive to a point, but then it stops there. Our party understands about the necessary change.

Someone pointed out earlier that the Liberal Party did not believe in proportional representation in any way, shape, or form. Here is what was passed at our Liberal Party convention in 2014. At our biannual convention in Montreal, we said:

—immediately after the next election, an all-Party process be instituted, involving expert assistance and citizen participation, to report to Parliament within 12 months with recommendations for electoral reforms including, without limitation, a preferential ballot and/or a form of proportional representation, to represent Canadians more fairly and serve Canada better.

That is a party position.

Despite that, however, because of the lack of information here, our leader has chosen to have a free vote. I have no doubt that many of our members will vote in favour of this because they believe it would be the best way to go. They have studied this option and they fully believe that. However, they are not happy about the fact that this has not been engaged in a citizenship discussion, and that is too bad. Some of the consultations that did take place were a resounding no.

Business of Supply

I asked proponents of this type of mixed-member system of proportional representation what they did during the referendum in their province. They said they voted against it because they really did not understand it. Many people in Ontario and P.E.I. who were faced with this type of system said that. That has to tell us as parliamentarians that we need to have open and public consultation across the country.

That was decided upon in British Columbia. In May 2005, B.C. had a controversial referendum. The result of the STV, single transferable vote, was 57.69% in favour, but it did not pass because the threshold was set at 60%. It decided to do it again. In May 2009, it was decided to do the identical referendum to resolve the ambiguity and the proposal was rejected by 60%. Over four years, B.C. had a chance to look at it, but maybe it did not like it. In all fairness, that was not the system the NDP has proposed today. It was a different one, the single transferable vote.

People in British Columbia told me they did not have all of the information. Some people had some really good arguments. I met with a group called Fair Voting BC, which had some great arguments as to why we should consider doing this. I thought it, along with Fair Vote Canada, provided some profound arguments. We should learn from what the people in B.C. have done, maybe from the mistakes they made or maybe put more information out there.

• (1635)

In November 2005, Prince Edward Island held a referendum on MMP, which was defeated by 63.58% of the vote. Again, what was one of the most common complaints? Not enough information.

In May 2009, B.C. redid the identical referendum, as I mentioned earlier, which was defeated by 60% of the vote.

In October 2007, Ontario held a referendum, and 63.13% decided that it was not for them, and in that one we heard a lot about misinformation and not a lot of people felt comfortable enough to vote for it.

Remember, those people want to change the system, but what do they want to change it to? What is it to become?

There are groups out there that are very active social media, such as Fair Vote Canada. It is going through a process of collecting information so it can make that argument. It will not make the mistake where people did not know a lot about it. It wants to get the information out there. It wants to sell a form of proportional representation that it feels is beneficial, as Doug Bailie, the president, pointed out. This was mentioned earlier by my colleague.

To be so prescriptive as we are now is not a good idea, in my opinion. As I said, other people in this party will vote for it. That is why we have the free vote. Even the leader of the NDP said, "You can't shove it down people's throats." Why?

The New Democrats have said that we will have a form of system. When I read it that it was a form of mixed-member proportional representation, I thought maybe that this was of some benefit. If it were a form of it, then we would have a parallel system. We would have people directly elected first past the post and then we also would have our open list. I did not even know it was an open list until the debate started.

I am not sure if this is evolving as we go along, not that there is anything wrong with that. However, I feel like I am not given that choice right now.

I applaud the efforts of the critic of the NDP for what he wants to do. As the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent pointed out, we need to be more collegial on these issues. We never had a discussion on this. I feel like this was only put in there as a wedge, that the members of one party in the House wanted to take this issue upon themselves. I will give them credit. They were talking about this before most other parties were. This is my way of reaching out and saying, "Let's do this." If they are so right, why do they not discuss it with us?

Our resolution in the Liberal Party stated that we wanted to look at a form of it. In fact, our resolution mirrors what their leader said a year and a half ago, almost to the word, but now it is about wedge politics.

The NDP has stood each and every day and preached openly about the duty to consult, that the Conservative government does not want to consult with people. Well then what is this? We take it upon the research of others. We can go to provinces like Ontario and P.E.I. Those are the only two provinces that have faced this. What about the other provinces? They never have had to face a referendum like this. Now we are in this situation.

I am still waiting to see how this debate unfolds. Quite frankly, if we are going to look at a form of proportional representation, the one the New Democrats are proposing is probably one of the more favourable ones. Germany and New Zealand have it, but let us put all the facts out there.

It is said that when MMP was introduced, voter turnout in New Zealand went up. That is true. The following election it went to a historic low. Therefore, how do we deal with that? We deal with it by having an open discussion on how it has worked in other countries, even if we have to look at countries as far away as Djibouti, which has it. Maybe there is something in that. However, I do not know if we even have an open-list concept that we can draw upon.

• (1640)

We talk about the coalition between the Christian Democrats and the Social Democratic Party over in Germany, but at what point on election night do they get to that point? How is Germany favoured in doing so? I would like to know.

Business of Supply

This is a free vote for us but we do not have a lot of time to discuss this. Back in 2013 the leader of the NDP had it right. This should not be shoved down anyone's throat. It should be talked about in an open manner so that people understand that this, as the NDP leader said, is "a profound democratic change". I applaud the people who want to change our system, because we want to change it too.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague very much for weighing in. Some explanation is needed.

It is not as if the debate is just starting now. It has been going on for decades and there is an accumulated series of studies, commissions, and citizens' assemblies on it. Eight out of nine of the serious ones have reported that a mixed member proportional system, MMP, is the best. We are standing here and saying that there are only two possibilities that would really work in Canada, and there is a consensus on that: a single transferable vote system, STV, or MMP. STV has no locally elected MPs—no single-member-constituency MPs. We personally believe, from all of the studies of the past 12 years, that Canadians would not accept that. Therefore, we are standing here and saying that the only other proportional representation system that would work in Canada is MMP. We have been studying it.

The fact is the Liberal Party has only recently begun to add a process commitment to look at proportional representation after the next election. It is not our fault that the Liberals are so far behind in thinking about this. The point is that if the Liberal Party were to stand up and move an amendment and say that it fully supported proportional representation, that proportional representation is what all parties should be committed to the next time around, that would change the debate because then we would only be arguing about which system. I have not heard that from the Liberal Party. It is very important to know.

What we have not heard is anything at all resembling a commitment to proportional representation, and that is not surprising when the leader of the Liberal Party is constantly saying that he does not support proportional representation, and giving bad reasons for not supporting it.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I respect where the member is coming from on this, and I have even alluded to the fact that the members have been talking about this for quite some time as a party mechanism. However, it has never really gotten to the point of fleshing it out in the public like this. I quoted the member's leader earlier, who just talked about the duty to consult on this profound democratic change. If he wanted to have something decent in the House today that we could all vote for, he could start with paragraph (a) of the motion, by saying that the first-past-the-post system fails us in the numbers that it produces. Then, as I said earlier, if that is followed up with a prescriptive measure that failed in other parts of the country, and miserably failed by a super majority, there is still a lot of work to do before we can actually put this to vote in the House and say it is the best system.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment that the three oldest continuing democracies in the world are all first-past-the-post systems: the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. We three countries have had our institutions longer than any other democratic system.

Unique to these three democracies is the fact that we all use the first-past-the-post system. We should be very cautious about this proposed change.

The other comment I have is that the House is based on representation by population and that we also have the senatorial floor for provincial divisions in the House, such as Prince Edward Island, which is mandated to have a minimum of four seats in the House of Commons. It would require some pretty complex adjustments to preserve that fundamental constitutional principle of representation by population and, at the same time, allocate a number of seats based on the proportion of popular vote.

Those are just the two comments that I have on this motion in front of us.

• (1645)

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for that. I do respect his opinion.

I do recall some of the changes to the Westminster system, such as what was done in the U.K. regarding the House of Lords. Also, we are looking at proportional representation in Australia as far as the Senate is concerned, as a playoff to that.

These experiments have good and bad parts. Again, we never really had a chance to discuss this. Some people might want to start this process in the Senate to see how it works and how we would go about doing that.

New Zealand had some time to come to terms with this in a couple of referendums. What runs through all this, as he mentioned, is that it is one of the oldest democracies around. To make a profound change like this in a two-and-a-half-hour debate, as prescriptive as it is, I would not find a responsible thing to do.

However, that being said, I am sure that a lot of people will vote to support this measure as it is right now. A lot of people have worked on this and have their opinions. I respect that, even if they do say yes to the proposal today.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the notion that the Liberal Party has taken a firm position not supporting proportional representation is news to many of us in the party. The idea that we have not been talking about this is news to many of us. As a former journalist, I have sat in on those conversations as a reporter covering those debates. Therefore, I am not sure where this idea of it being new to us comes from.

What is new today are the details of the proposition we are being asked to speak to and vote on in very detailed specifics, that being a list of 100. The details of the bill are not known until suddenly we ask questions in the House.

In the spirit of collaboration, I am curious as to whether anyone from the sponsoring party has approached the Liberal Party or the critic responsible and detailed exactly what the NDP means by this very specific proposal we are learning about today

Business of Supply

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, no, I have not received anything formally like that. I would love to have chatted about how we could study this, whether to have one of the committees, even a legislative committee or a special committee for that matter, look at this sort of thing. I would certainly be open to that.

As for some of the details that are coming out, as my hon. colleague noted, I am not quite sure about them. Some of the details about open lists and closed lists are coming out during all this. I am not sure that either would work in our country, given its size. That is part of an argument that could be had. The discussions in the academic world, to me, have been really good so far. The problem is that we have to take that from the academic world out into Main Street, to use the common phrase, and bring it to people to say that this is the system.

The system the NDP is proposing has a big element of first past the post, but also has that section that is done by proportional representation to allow smaller parties' representation. Fundamentally, that is not a bad thing, but we have to look at the fact that some things will change. Ridings get larger.

Perhaps there are other ways of doing it. Perhaps multi-member ridings would work better for a proportional system in our country. This has to be discussed.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is an expression in Quebec that we used to hear all the time, until about 10 years ago or so, to the effect that New Democrats were Liberals in a hurry. I think that people are starting to realize that the Liberals are slightly lazy New Democrats who are a bit short on courage. Today's debate illustrates that.

My colleague has noticed, as we have, an incredible decline in youth voter turnout. In some cases youth voter turnout is 25%. I tour the colleges back home when I can and talk to the young people. There are some who come to meet me in the cafeteria and I am always greatly honoured to see them. They tell me that the current voting system does not encourage them to vote. That is a major problem.

I am sure that my colleague sees that this is a problem. Why does he not want to participate in this debate? My NDP colleague moved this motion so that there would be a debate, so that we could have the courage to move forward and have the courage of the New Democrats. I invite the Liberals to have the courage of the New Democrats and to participate in this debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, sometimes there is a fine line between courage and stupidity, and I do not mean that in a derogatory way. I apologize if he is offended by that, but here is the problem. One cannot rush ahead and do something with bits of information that is put out to the public for people to consume.

I want to repeat what the leader of the NDP said:

The other thing that people have to understand is that even if it's not constitutional change per se, it is profound democratic change, and precisely because of that, it's not

the type of thing that you can do either by just snapping your fingers the day after an election, or without profound consultation.

The courage of one's conviction must be measured in the public realm. That is how one gets people to vote for something. What if a referendum were proposed down the road? The information will have to be disseminated better than it has been so far. Luckily, there are people in organizations like Fair Vote Canada and others to do that, to help us have that debate and get through it. The courage that he is talking about is not where the courage lies in making a solid stand, if the NDP wants proportional representation in this country.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting, as I rise to speak to the motion put forward by the member for Toronto—Danforth, to hear people talk about how we cannot rush into this change.

I was elected in 2004. I would like to pretend that this is the very first time that I have risen in the House to speak to the notion of moving toward proportional representation, but sadly, it is not.

I spoke about it when our former leader and the former member for Ottawa Centre was in the House in 2004 and 2005. I spoke about it when Catherine Bell, the former member for Vancouver Island North, brought forward her motion. I spoke about it in 2008, when a member from the Bloc brought forward a motion.

I know that over the last 10 years, many other members in this place have raised it time and time again. I hardly think that this is a rapid change. In addition, a number of studies have been done and I am going to reference them.

Before that, Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Ottawa Centre.

I would like to turn to the 2004 report from the Law Commission of Canada entitled "Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada". I wish I could read all of the couple of hundred pages, but I cannot.

In its executive summary, it said:

For the past decade or so, Canada has been in the grip of a democratic malaise evidenced by decreasing levels of political trust, declining voter turnout, increasing cynicism toward politicians and traditional forms of political participation, and growing disengagement of young people from politics. However, as the Commission heard throughout its consultation process, many citizens want to be involved, want to have a real voice in decision making, and would like to see more responsive, accountable, and effective political institutions.

That was in 2004. A substantial amount of consultation was taking place and some very strong recommendations were made.

It goes on to criticize our current first-past-the-post system. Those of us who have been around for a while can talk about the problems and challenges with our first-past-the-post system after seeing in 2011, that the Conservative government was elected with less than 40% of the vote.

There is something wrong with a system that allows less than 40% of the voters, which was only about 25% of the eligible voters because the voter turnout was so low, to actually put a government in a majority situation. It is now driving the agenda for a whole country, when it does not remotely have a majority of Canadians supporting it.

Business of Supply

The Law Commission of Canada identified problems with the first-past-the-post system. It said:

For many Canadians, this system is inherently unfair—more likely to frustrate or distort the wishes of the voters than to translate them fairly into representation and influence in the legislature. It has been criticized as: being overly generous to the party that wins a plurality of the vote, rewarding it with a legislative majority disproportionate to its share of the vote; allowing the governing party, with its artificially swollen legislative majority, to dominate the political agenda; promoting parties formed along regional lines, thus exacerbating Canada's regional divisions; leaving large areas of the country without adequate representatives in the governing party caucus; disregarding a large number of votes in that voters who do not vote for the winning candidate have no connection to the elected representative, nor to the eventual make-up of the House of Commons; contributing to the under-representation of women, minority groups, and Aboriginal peoples; preventing a diversity of ideas from entering the House of Commons; and favouring an adversarial style of politics.

Again, over the last three years, I can certainly speak to my own personal experience in the House. It is the most adversarial that I have seen it in the 10 years that I have been a member.

In its conclusion, the Law Commission of Canada said:

Canada inherited its first-past-the-post electoral system from Great Britain over 200 years ago, at a time when significant sections of the Canadian population, including women, Aboriginal people, and nonproperty owners, were disenfranchised.

I heard the Liberal member talk about the fact that there are three western democracies that still have this system. It seemed to me that he was touting this as a great thing, whereas other democracies have moved on. I would suggest that, perhaps, after 200 years of the same system, it might be time to take a fresh look at how Canadians should be represented.

The Law Commission of Canada also said:

Canada's political, cultural, and economic reality has vastly changed; the current electoral system no longer responds to 21st century Canadian democratic values. Many Canadians desire an electoral system that better reflects the society in which they live—one that includes a broader diversity of ideas and is more representative of Canadian society. For these reasons, the Commission recommends adding an element of proportionality to our electoral system.

Furthermore, because of its many potential benefits, electoral reform should be a priority item on the political agenda.

• (1655)

Its final note was:

However, it has become apparent that the first-past-the-post electoral system no longer meets the democratic aspirations of many Canadians. Electoral reform is thus a necessary step to energize and strengthen Canadian democracy.

Ten years ago and we are still making no movement with regard to examining the first-past-the-post system.

In a speech on October 15, 2005, on ethics and democratic reform, the Hon. Ed Broadbent noted a couple of key points. I will not talk about the ethics and the accountability part of the speech, but I will focus on proportional representation.

In his opening statement, he said:

The debate and time spent in Parliament should be about the state of our health-care and the state of our economy, about foreign policy and human rights, about the security of our seniors and the poverty of our children. I have never seen such a reversal of priorities as in the past 12 months.

I want to remind people that this is 2005 I am talking about. He said:

Time spent on governmental policy has yielded more often than not to debates about the process of governance: about Canadians' concern over the integrity of elected politicians and public servants, about the rules and accountability governing

those appointed, about access to information, about contract corruption, about high living at public expense, about unaccountable lobbyists, about wrong-doing partisan-appointed officials resigning with legal impunity—

Here we are almost 10 years later and we have got exactly the same situation here in this House. We can lay part of that at the foot of the fact that we still have a first-past-the-post system. We do not have a more representative House here.

Mr. Broadbent talked about the ethics and about some of the ways to address the accountability deficit in this House, but he also talked about democratic reform. He said:

A major source of needed democratic reform is our outmoded first-past-the-post electoral system.

Ninety percent of the world's democracies, including Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Ireland and Wales have abandoned or significantly modified the pre-democratic British system that still prevails in Ottawa. As the Law Commission recommended and five provinces seem to agree, fairness means we need a mixed electoral system that combines individual constituency-based MPs with proportional representation. Only such a system would positively redress the existing imbalance in gender, ethnic, ideological and regional voting preferences.

Just a note on the gender issues, over a couple of decades we have only seen the representation of women marginally increase in this House. In many countries, proportional representation has assisted in that.

He went on to say:

In particular, as the Pepin-Robarts Commission pointed out 26 years ago, our present system does a great disservice to Canadian unity because regional representation in the House of Commons—in the caucuses and in the cabinet—does not reflect Canadian voters' intentions.

I know that members in other parts of the House talk about how the Senate can address regional representation, but I am talking about elected representation here. That way, people have a real voice in who it is that speaks for them here in the House.

British Columbia unfortunately had a failed referendum with regard to a single transferable vote, but the process that was used in order to come up with the system, the first time it went to a referendum, it was so close that the government had to hold a second referendum.

Part of the reason the second referendum lost was not because people were not hungry for change, they wanted change, but what happened in British Columbia was that many people did not understand the system.

Many British Columbians that I spoke to, after the referendum failed, said that they really did want change, but they did not understand what it was, so they voted no.

What we need is a very clear proposal for Canadians, outlining how it would affect them in their riding, in their district, and how their access to a parliamentary procedure would improve under a system of proportional representation.

We should all be very concerned in this House about the lack of participation in the electoral process. We should all take a hard look at how we operate in this House. Our objective here should be to increase voter participation. Our objective should be to ensure that the values of Canadians are adequately represented in this House by having a broad cross-section.

Business of Supply

I have heard people say that the NDP proposed this system because it would advantage it.

● (1700)

Actually, in a number of elections, proportional representation would have advantaged the other parties, whether it was the Liberals, the old Reformers or the Green Party. We are proposing a system that will more adequately reflect what Canadians want to see.

I would encourage all members of the House to support this good motion and help us ensure that the next election in 2019 reflects true Canadian wishes.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the intervention from my neighbour on Vancouver Island from the riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan.

The member mentioned the citizens' assembly back in 2004. It was actually promised by the previous Liberal government to create a citizens' assembly to look at electoral reform. That assembly, with two people from each of the 79 electoral districts, came up with a formula and they chose an MMPR formula that they then presented in the referendum. It was rejected by the people of British Columbia. It was rejected here in Ontario and it was rejected in P.E.I.

I would like to go back to British Columbia briefly. I was there in a restaurant while 100 people were in a room next door having a presentation on this, and when they came out afterward, I was having lunch with a friend, a business colleague. When I asked what it was all about, they said it was about the new electoral referendum question. I asked a woman if she understood it now. They had been in there an hour. She said she had this booklet. That is the problem. If they cannot explain it to a voter in an hour, it is too complicated, and frankly, it has been rejected all over the place.

Does the member not recognize that the NDP is trying to push through something that Canadians in our province have already rejected?

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, I actually addressed that in my speech by saying that part of the challenge for people with the single transferable vote system was they wanted change. That was pretty clear in the first referendum. It was 57% and they needed 60% to make that referendum pass.

We have to wonder about the cynical approach in setting up that referendum. The Liberals made the threshold so high. First, they put together a citizens' assembly and they thought that the citizens' assembly could never come to consensus. They were wrong. The citizens' assembly came to a consensus. Then they set the referendum threshold very high. It was a complicated formula and it came so close that what they actually had to do was go back and have a second referendum.

That clearly demonstrates that there is an appetite for change. We have to work with people in order to ensure they understand the change and that they are involved in putting forward a proposal that will work for them.

● (1705)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I note with interest that there had been 28 provincial governments led by the NDP and not one of them has ever proposed this. In fact,

every single time proportional representation has been put on the ballot for a referendum, it has been done by a Liberal provincial government, but somehow our support is in question. It is strange.

The critical piece here is that we are being asked to support a very specific proposal with a very vague motion and the challenge that we have is trying to understand exactly what the member means. She talks about the concern about lack of representation from certain groups. What we find is that the trade-off for that is massively bigger ridings.

I have a colleague from Labrador who can barely get to her entire riding within a given year because of its size. The hon. member is proposing to make it even bigger.

The trouble with this is, if we have the voting system as described by the member, it would be extraordinarily difficult to prevent large money candidates from always topping that list.

You cannot do this with the snap of a finger. You have to have public consultation. Why will you not agree with your leader?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I remind the hon. member to avoid using that “you” word. When we start doing that, we tend to not be addressing the Speaker.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member quoting my leader in the House. I am pleased to hear that the Liberals listen to the leader of the official opposition. That is good news.

I also want to acknowledge the comment that an NDP provincial government had not put forward a system of proportional representation. It is unfortunate that has happened because we would have had a good chance to have it succeed if an NDP government had moved forward with that initiative.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: That is what happened in Saskatchewan and Ontario.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I want to thank the House leader for heckling during my speech, Mr. Speaker.

I still believe that, fundamentally, at the core of what we are talking about is a desire for change in the electoral system. People are very concerned about the hyper-partisanship that is a symptom of our parliamentary process. They are very concerned about the under representation of youth, women and aboriginal peoples in this House.

Surely, again, if we are concerned about what many people are calling the democratic deficit, we would move forward on a system that better reflects the wishes of Canadians.

*Business of Supply***ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK**

BILL C-40—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the third reading stage of Bill C-40, an act respecting the Rouge National Urban Park.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting motions to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage of the said bill.

* * *

ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 2

BILL C-43—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-43, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting motions to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stages of the said bill.

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BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before we resume debate, I will let the member know that there are five minutes remaining in the time provided for the debate this afternoon.

The hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will truncate my comments, but the message is fairly clear. We have a democracy that has been around since 1867. It predates access to electricity. We on this side think it is about time to look at reforming a system that allows the Conservative Party and the previous Liberal government to have all the power with only 38% of voters, out of which half of the population voted.

I have travelled as the foreign affairs spokesperson for my party, and the Government of Canada advises other governments about democratic reform. If we were to ask people if it is an acceptable system for a minority of citizens to decide where the power goes and to say that the status quo is fine, they would look at us and ask what was wrong with us. That is what New Democrats are talking about. We are talking about the fact that it is time for us to actually deal with democratic reform.

I have to say that this comes just after the government and the Prime Minister wrote about the importance of democratic reform. Mr. Speaker, you know this as I am sure you have read all of the

Prime Minister's writings, particularly those before he became Prime Minister. He co-authored a paper on proportional representation. It was our Prime Minister who advocated this system. New Democrats are simply saying that we agree with him, and let us get on with it.

The old prime minister understood our system. He lived through it. He saw the phony majority governments of Jean Chrétien and prior to that, when a party that received less than 40% of the vote got all of the power. It goes deeper than that. It is something we are seeing in the United States, which is very troubling. It is when people see there is no opportunity for their votes to count. We have to change that, because people are becoming cynical.

A discussion I often have is about young people not voting. People say they do not know what is wrong with young people. It is not what is wrong with young people; it is what is wrong with our democratic system. Young people are smart, and they are saying that until the system is fixed, they are not going to participate. They are looking at the choices and saying that if they vote, their votes will be wasted.

There are a couple of ridings that always vote Conservative. If there are Green Party or NDP supporters, they know their votes are wasted and they do not vote. They simply decide not to use their franchise. Similarly, in a riding that is typically NDP, Conservatives' votes are wasted, and that is wrong. It is fundamental to our democracy.

I remember a quote from Governor Smith of New York, who famously said that the solution for all that ails democracy is more democracy. That is exactly what we need in our system. That is what our proposal is about. We have seen it work very well. This is what we are proposing to take to Canadians, unlike our Liberal friend, who made some weird statement about New Democrats not consulting and who also thinks we have a \$400 billion infrastructure deficit. He made that up. For some reason, Liberals think that talking about it in the House of Commons, bringing forward a motion, running on it in an election, and then actually consulting people is somehow not consulting. It is the Liberal way, I guess.

We are serious about reforming our system so that every vote will count. If every vote counts, then we will have what New Zealand has. New Zealand has a history similar to ours, a Westminster tradition. What did New Zealanders do? They took what New Democrats are proposing here and put it into action. Not only that, they then had a referendum after a couple of years. It took place just a couple of years ago, and it asked the people of New Zealand if they thought it was working and if they liked it. Everyone said yes. That is what we are talking about.

The way it would work is people would vote for the people they want to represent them in their ridings and the party of their choice. It gives people more choice. It is very simple. It would allow Canadians to see their votes count and for the votes to be recognized in Parliament.

At the end of the day, what is happening in New Zealand, which I know might sadden some Conservatives, is that toxic politics are gone. People actually work together to make sure that the business of the people comes first, rather than having all these toxic talking points and wedge politics, which might be a reason for the party not to support the previous position of their Prime Minister.

• (1710)

I would ask members to look to Canadians, particularly young Canadians, and say, “Let us reform our system. Let us make every vote count. Let us make sure that we take a system conceived in 1867, before we had electricity, and modernize it so that we can have a Parliament that functions for everyone.”

This is why I want all members, in good conscience, to ask themselves if they want to improve things in their country. If they do, then let us change the system. Let us have democratic reform in our electoral system and vote yes to this motion.

• (1715)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:15 p.m., and this being the final supply day in the period ending December 10, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[*Translation*]

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 nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

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

• (1755)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 291*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Atamanenko
Bélangier
Benskin
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Brahmi

Ashton
Aubin
Bennett
Bevington
Boivin
Boutin-Sweet
Brisson

Brosseau
Cash
Chicoine
Choquette
Comartin
Crowder
Cuzner
Day
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Freeman
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Groguhé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes
Julian
Lapointe
Latendresse
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Marston
Masse
May
McGuinity
Michaud
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Papillon
Pécelet
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Ravignat
Saganash
Scott
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Stewart
Thibeault
Tremblay
Valeriotte

Business of Supply

Caron
Charlton
Chisholm
Christopherson
Côté
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Fry
Genest
Giguère
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Hyer
Kellway
Larose
Lavergère
Leslie
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Patri
Perreault
Plamondon
Rafferty
Rathgeber
Raynault
Sandhu
Sellah
Sitsabaiesan
Sullivan
Toone
Turnel
Vaughan— 110

NAYS

Members

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

Business of Supply

Glover	Goguen
Goodale	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayas	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Jones	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Nicholson	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Pacetti
Paradis	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Rajotte	Regan
Reid	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger	Seeback
Sgro	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Smith	
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Trudeau	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (Saint John)
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 166

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

[Translation]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2014-15

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1B—VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC) moved:

That Vote 1b, in the amount of \$8,400,358, under VETERANS AFFAIRS—Veterans Affairs—Operating expenditures, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015, be concurred in.

[English]

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I distinctly heard “nos” surrounding me at this end, so I do not see how that could be unanimous. I do not believe that had unanimous consent.**The Speaker:** I did ask a couple of times if everyone was in favour. I did not hear anything at the time. It would be of great assistance to the Chair if members who do oppose do so with some effort, as it is always difficult to go back to try to revisit these things. However, I deliberately asked a second and I think even a third time if there were people opposed. I did not hear anything, so we will move on to the next one.**Hon. Tony Clement** moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015, except any vote disposed of earlier today, be concurred in.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the results of the previous vote to the current vote, with Conservative members voting yes.

● (1800)

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?**Some hon. member:** Agreed.

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the results of the previous vote. The NDP votes no.

[English]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, Liberals agree to apply the results of the previous vote, and we will be voting no.

[Translation]

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a problem with this way of doing things, but I will be voting no.

[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting no.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois votes no.**Mr. Jean-François Larose:** Mr. Speaker, Forces et Démocratie votes no.

[English]

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Mr. Speaker, I vote yea.**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** Mr. Speaker, we will be voting no, as we clearly did on the last motion.**Mr. John Weston:** Mr. Speaker, I was not in the House for the previous vote, but I vote yes on this one.

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, I forgot to mention that the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl was not present for the previous vote. His vote should be added to the votes against the motion in this vote.

Ms. Manon Perreault: Mr. Speaker, I vote no.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Speaker, I vote no.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify that when the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North rose, he spoke on behalf of the Green Party, so both of our votes are applied.

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

(Division No. 292)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	O'Connor
Oblrai	O'Neill Gordon
Oliver	O'Toole
Opitz	Payne
Paradis	Preston
Poillievre	Rathgeber
Rajotte	Richards
Reid	Ritz
Rickford	Schellenberger
Saxton	Shea
Seeback	Shory
Shiple	Sopuck
Smith	Stanton
Sorenson	Strahl
Storseth	

Sweet
Toet
Trottier
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 151

Business of Supply

Tilson
Trost
Truppe
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Young (Oakville)
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Bélangier
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathyssen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaesans
Stewart	Sullivan
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau
Turnel	Valeriote
Vaughan — 127	

Business of Supply

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Tony Clement moved that Bill C-45, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2015 be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you shall find agreement to apply the results of the previous vote to the current vote, with the Conservative members voting yes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 293)

YEAS

Members

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

Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)

Nicholson	O'Connor
Obhrai	O'Neill Gordon
Oliver	O'Toole
Opitz	Payne
Paradis	Preston
Poilievre	Rathgeber
Rajotte	Richards
Reid	Ritz
Rickford	Schellenberger
Saxton	Shea
Seeback	Shory
ShIPLEY	Sopuck
Smith	Stanton
Sorenson	Strahl
Storseth	Tilson
Sweet	Trost
Toet	Truppe
Trottier	Valcourt
Uppal	Van Loan
Van Kesteren	Wallace
Vellacott	Warkentin
Warawa	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Watson	
Sky Country)	Wilks
Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Williamson	Young (Oakville)
Woodworth	Yurdiga
Young (Vancouver South)	
Zimmer — 151	

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Bélanger
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon

Patry
Perreault
Plamondon
Rafferty
Ravignat
Regan
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Stewart
Thibeault
Tremblay
Turnel
Vaughan— 127

Péclet
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Raynault
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sitsabaiesan
Sullivan
Toone
Trudeau
Valeriote

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole. I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mr. Joe Comartin in the chair)

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could the President of Treasury Board confirm that the supply bill is in its usual form?

(On clause 2)

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, the form of this bill is identical to that used in the previous supply period.

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Business of Supply

(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 7 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Preamble agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Bill agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.
(Bill reported)

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you would find agreement to apply the vote from second reading to the current motion.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Business of Supply

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 294)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin

Watson
Sky Country
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 151

Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Young (Oakville)
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Bélangier
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Gameau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Stewart	Sullivan
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau
Turmel	Valeriotte
Vaughan — 127	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Tony Clement moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: The hon. Chief Government Whip.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the previous vote to the current motion.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 295)

YEAS

Members

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

Obhrai
Oliver
Opitz
Paradis
Poilievre
Rajotte
Reid
Rickford
Saxton
Seeback
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trotter
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 151

Business of Supply

O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Payne
Preston
Rathgeber
Richards
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Trost
Truppe
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Young (Oakville)
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Andrews
Atamanenko
Bélanger
Benskin
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Brahmi
Brosseau
Caron
Charlton
Chisholm
Christopherson
Comartin
Crowder
Cuzner
Day
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseau
Eyking
Freeland
Fry
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Hyer
Julian
Lamoureux
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Pécllet
Pilon

Private Members' Business

Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Stewart	Sullivan
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau
Turnel	Valerioté
Vaughan— 127	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS*[English]***DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT**

The House resumed from November 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-574, an act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood) be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-574 under private members' business.

• (1815)

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

(Division No. 296)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Bélangier
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boutin-Sweet	Brisson
Brousseau	Byrne
Caron	Cash
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Footé
Freeland	Freeman
Fry	Garneau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hughes

Hyer	Jones
Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Péclét
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Stewart	Sullivan
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Trudeau
Turnel	Valerioté
Vaughan— 121	

NAYS

Members

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

Private Members' Business

Maguire	Marston
Martin	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poilievre	Preston
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 154

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

CANADA PENSION PLAN AND OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

The House resumed from November 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-591, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act (pension and benefits), be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-591.

● (1825)

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

(Division No. 297)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Welland)
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Andrews	Armstrong
Ashton	Aspin
Atamanenko	Aubin
Barlow	Bateman
Bélanger	Bennett
Benoit	Benskin
Bergen	Bernier
Bevington	Bezan
Blanchette-Lamothe	Blaney
Block	Boivin
Boughen	Boutin-Sweet

Brahmi	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brosseau	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinoooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Caron	Carrie
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Chisu	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Cleary
Clement	Côté
Cotler	Crockatt
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dechert
Devolin	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dreeshen	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseauil	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Foote	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Galipeau	Gallant
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Gill
Glover	Godin
Goguen	Goodale
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Gravelle
Grewal	Groguhé
Harper	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	James
Jones	Julian
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kellway	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Lauzon	Laverdière
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leslie	Leung
Liu	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathyszen
May	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLeod	Menegakis
Michaud	Miller
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nicholson
Nunez-Melo	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Pacetti
Papillon	Paradis
Patry	Payne

Private Members' Business

Péclet
Pilon
Poilievre
Quach
Rajotte
Rathgeber
Raynault
Reid
Rickford
Saganash
Saxton
Schellenberger
Seeback
Sgro
Shipley
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Sopuck
Stanton
Storseth
Sullivan
Thibeault
Toet
Tremblay
Trottier
Truppe
Uppal
Valeriotte
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Wilks
Wong
Young (Oakville)
Yurdiga

Perreault
Plamondon
Preston
Rafferty
Rankin
Ravignat
Regan
Richards
Ritz
Sandhu
Scarpaleggia
Scott
Sellah
Shea
Shory
Smith
Sorenson
Stewart
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Toone
Trost
Trudeau
Turmel
Valcourt
Van Kesteren
Vaughan
Warawa
Watson
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 276

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

**MAIN POINT OF CONTACT WITH THE GOVERNMENT
OF CANADA IN CASE OF DEATH ACT**

The House resumed from December 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-247, An Act to expand the mandate of Service Canada in respect of the death of a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident, be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-247.

• (1835)

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

(Division No. 298)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Welland)
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson

Andrews
Ashton
Atamanenko
Barlow
Bélanger
Benoit
Bergen
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Block
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Braid
Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Bruinooge
Byrne
Calkins
Carmichael
Carrie
Charlton
Chisholm
Chong
Christopherson
Cleary
Côté
Crockatt
Cullen
Daniel
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dechert
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubé
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dykstra
Eyking
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Freeland
Fry
Gallant
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Gill
Godin
Goodale
Gosal
Gravelle
Groguié
Harris (St. John's East)
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
Hsu
Hyer
Jones
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kellway
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Larose
Lauzon
Lebel
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Leitch
Leslie
Liu
Lobb
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
Marston
Masse
May
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)

Armstrong
Aspin
Aubin
Bateman
Bennett
Benskin
Bernier
Bezan
Blaney
Boivin
Boughen
Brahmi
Breitkreuz
Brosseau
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Butt
Calandra
Cannan
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Chisu
Choquette
Clarke
Clement
Cotler
Crowder
Cuzner
Davidson
Day
Devolin
Dion
Donnelly
Dreeschen
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseau
Easter
Falk
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Foote
Freeman
Galipeau
Garneau
Genest
Giguère
Glover
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Grewal
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
Holder
Hughes
James
Julian
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lapointe
Latendresse
Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leaf
Lemieux
Leung
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacAulay
MacKenzie
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 299)*

YEAS

Members

Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nicholls
 Nunez-Melo
 O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 O'Toole
 Papillon
 Patry
 Péclet
 Pilon
 Poilievre
 Quach
 Rajotte
 Rathgeber
 Raynault
 Reid
 Rickford
 Saganash
 Saxton
 Schellenberger
 Seeback
 Sgro
 Shipley
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Storseth
 Sullivan
 Thibeault
 Toet
 Tremblay
 Trottier
 Truppe
 Uppal
 Valeriotte
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mourani
 Murray
 Nash
 Nicholson
 Obhrai
 Oliver
 Opitz
 Pacetti
 Paradis
 Payne
 Perreault
 Plamondon
 Preston
 Rafferty
 Rankin
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Richards
 Ritz
 Sandhu
 Scarpaleggia
 Scott
 Sellah
 Shea
 Shory
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Stewart
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Tilson
 Toone
 Trost
 Trudeau
 Turmel
 Valcourt
 Van Kesteren
 Vaughan
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Vancouver South)
 Zimmer — 276

Ablonczy
 Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Andrews
 Ashton
 Atamanenko
 Barlow
 Bélanger
 Benoit
 Bergen
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Block
 Borg
 Boutin-Sweet
 Braid
 Brison
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Butt
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Chisu
 Choquette
 Clarke
 Clement
 Cotler
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Davidson
 Day
 Devolin
 Dion
 Donnelly
 Dreeshen
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Easter
 Falk
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Foote
 Freeman
 Galipeau
 Garneau
 Genest
 Giguère
 Glover
 Goguen
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Grewal
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Hughes
 James
 Julian
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lapointe
 Latendresse
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leaf
 Lemieux
 Leung

Adams
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Welland)
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Armstrong
 Aspin
 Aubin
 Bateman
 Bennett
 Benskin
 Bernier
 Bezan
 Blaney
 Boivin
 Boughen
 Brahmī
 Breitzkreuz
 Brosseau
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Byrne
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Carrie
 Charlton
 Chisholm
 Chong
 Christopherson
 Cleary
 Côté
 Crockatt
 Cullen
 Daniel
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dechert
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Dubé
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Dykstra
 Eyking
 Fantino
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Freeland
 Fry
 Gallant
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Gill
 Godin
 Goodale
 Gosal
 Gravelle
 Groguhé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 Hsu
 Hyer
 Jones
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kellway
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lamoureux
 Larose
 Lauzon
 Lebel
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Leitch
 Leslie
 Liu

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
 (Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

LINCOLN ALEXANDER DAY

The House resumed from December 2 consideration of the motion that Bill S-213, An Act respecting Lincoln Alexander Day, be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill S-213.

• (1840)

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

Private Members' Business

Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Michaud
Miller	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mourani	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nicholson	Nunez-Melo
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Pacetti	Papillon
Paradis	Patry
Payne	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Poilievre
Preston	Quach
Rafferty	Rajotte
Rankin	Rathgeber
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Reid
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saganash
Sandhu	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Scott	Seeback
Sellah	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaesan
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Stewart	Storseth
Strahl	Sullivan
Sweet	Thibeault
Tilson	Toet
Toone	Tremblay
Trost	Trottier
Trudeau	Truppe
Turnel	Uppal
Valcourt	Valeriotte
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vaughan	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 275	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

● (1845)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:45 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

[English]

**IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION
REGULATIONS**

The House resumed from October 23 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to speak to what I think is a really important issue. It is an issue that I believe we do not give enough attention to.

Immigration is a very important issue. The motion that we have before us today is a bit confusing in the way it reads and in the message that the member might be trying to get out. It implies, in essence, the issue of proxy marriages and so forth. The member has missed what I believe is an important issue by bringing forward this motion, as opposed to dealing with the broader issue of immigration and marriages that are taking place.

It is an issue that I deal with on almost a weekly basis, and I say that without any exaggeration whatsoever. I have had the opportunity to raise the issue during question period, even when I was the immigration critic for the Liberal Party. It is an issue that is here today, and it has gotten a lot worse under the Conservative government.

Because it is about marriages, I would like to take this opportunity to focus the government on what I and many members of the Liberal Party believe is a very important issue. Let me start by sharing a couple of tangible examples that I have had to experience. One of them is fairly recent.

As much as possible, every week, or I would say 48 to 50 times per year, I go to a local restaurant in my community on a Saturday. The last few Saturdays, I have had an individual come to talk to me about his marriage. I am using this as an example. This individual went back to India in January 2013. He got married and has a wonderful relationship. A few months later, he came back to Canada after staying in India for a period of time and put in his application to sponsor his wife.

It is hard for us to imagine that after being married, one would have to wait weeks or months to be joined by one's spouse. It has been well over a year in this particular case, and it is still a big unknown, a question mark, in terms of when his spouse will be able to join him.

I believe that his application was submitted in May of 2013. There were a few changes made over that summer period. The individual is very emotional and wants to see his wife here in Canada. He is appealing to me as a member of Parliament to try to get his wife here. Sadly, this individual is not alone.

We have now been in the process of trying to assist this particular individual for weeks already. We have been trying to get a better understanding. I believe that my office was actually contacted months ago. The issue seems to be nothing more than the processing of paper. There does not seem to be any question in terms of the legitimacy of the marriage. I have well over 20 years of experience dealing with immigration, and I do not quite understand why this particular file is taking as long as it is.

Private Members' Business

•(1850)

It is difficult when we meet with constituents who are pleading to be united with their spouse. By not speeding up the process, we are deferring the opportunity for this gentleman and for thousands like him, of both genders, to be with their spouses here in Canada. I think that is a great travesty, and we need to put more emphasis on it.

The government motion that we have before us is challenging the legitimacy of marriages, and I understand that the government is working on legislation to deal with that particular issue. My challenge to the government and in particular to this member is to look at trying to assist people and to facilitate their being together after marriage in a much more timely fashion. As well, I must say that there is a double standard out there.

I appreciate the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration listening to what I am saying. I appreciate that he appeared to have taken some action, and I give him credit. A while back, information was passed on to my constituency office about paperwork that had been processed, but there seemed to be a freeze on issuing the visa. Shortly thereafter, we raised the issue in question period. The matter seemed to resolve itself. I am not too sure what the minister might have done, but I recognize that he put in some effort in making that situation turn around.

Because we are dealing with an emotional matter, I am suggesting that we try to recognize the issue that no doubt is there. There are some serious issues with proxy marriages. I look across the way for someone to correct me if I am wrong, but from what I understand, the government is attempting to deal with the issue through legislation. As much as many people in Canada, especially stakeholders, would have some concerns in regard to this issue, I suggest that there is a bigger issue that needs to be dealt with. That issue is the processing times, because there is so much room for improvement.

If a person happens to marry in a country where visas are not required, it is very easy to bring the spouse back to Canada. My son is a good example of that. He went to the United States and fell in love with a wonderful young lady who is now my daughter-in-law. They had no problem coming to Canada, and they started their lives together. I am very happy about that. There are many countries where that can take place.

However, if countries require visas, I would suggest that when individuals leave Canada and get married there, they later find themselves in a situation in which one partner is coming back to Canada and the other partner is in the process of waiting. To what degree would we want our friends, our children, or whoever it might be, to have to wait through the time period that is expected today? It is far too long.

I say this because I really do believe there is so much room for improvement. If it were one of us being affected, I suspect that we would get fairly upset and demand action.

•(1855)

For people who are here today, whether they are landed residents or were born in Canada or have been here for a year or 15 years, the level of priority for reuniting families should be equal among us all. I

do not believe we are putting enough emphasis on speeding up the processing times.

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate on Motion No. 505. It says, in part:

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....

As the Minister of Status of Women, this is an issue that is very near and dear to me. I want to thank the member for Mississauga South for all her work on this extremely important file, and for providing me the opportunity to speak to it.

It seems appropriate, given the subject matter of today's debate, for all of us in Canada and across the world to take a moment to mark the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. These 16 days began on November 25 and will end on December 10, International Human Rights Day. We will also mark our National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6, which this year marks the 25th anniversary of the tragic murders of 14 young women at École Polytechnique de Montréal in 1989 who were killed simply because they were women. Each year these occasions provide us a solemn reminder that gender-based violence is never far from everyday life here in Canada. They remind us that we can no longer be a country that sees gender-based violence as a women's issue. Everyone in Canada needs to be part of the solution.

It is in this context that I want to address the motion before the House today. This motion calls on the government to amend the immigration and refugee protection regulations in order to “ban the use of proxy, telephone, and fax marriages as a means to spousal sponsorship”, and to exclude the use of such marriages for the purpose of immigration, and to set out measures that communicate to visa officers how to detect such marriages. Marriage by proxy is a cultural practice in certain parts of the world. While the performance of such marriages is not legally permitted here in Canada, they may be recognized for purposes of Canadian immigration law when conducted in jurisdictions outside of Canada where these types of marriages are legal.

I thank the hon. member for Mississauga South for introducing this important motion, which I support completely. Let me explain why I feel this motion is so valuable and very much in line with our government's priorities.

Last year, our most recent Speech from the Throne indicated that addressing the vulnerabilities of women in the context of immigration would be a very important area for the government to focus on. Our government committed to ensure that women and girls would no longer be “brutalized by violence, including through the inhumane practice of early and forced marriage” on Canadian soil. That is why our government, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, has introduced a new bill, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. I am pleased that we on this side of the House are focused on strengthening the protection of vulnerable women in Canada's immigration system and on forcefully and resolutely supporting the rights of immigrant and newcomer women.

Private Members' Business

In order to do so, our government must ensure that Canada's immigration policies and practices are especially focused on strengthening the protection of immigrant and newcomer women. Indeed, it is deeply troubling that harmful cultural practices, such as polygamy, female genital mutilation, and forced and under-aged marriages, still exist as a reality for some Canadian women. That is why I am happy to note our government's proactive approach to decreasing the vulnerabilities of immigrant and newcomer women. For example, regulations put in place in recent years have made it much more difficult for people convicted of crimes that result in bodily harm against members of their family or other particular violent offences to sponsor any family class member to come to Canada.

Other measures have been introduced to deter foreign nationals from entering into marriages of convenience to gain permanent residence status in Canada. This includes two-year conditional permanent residence status for certain sponsored spouses. To protect sponsored spouses who are in abusive relationships, our government put in an exemption to these measures in instances where there is evidence of any abuse of a physical, sexual, psychological, or financial nature.

Better guidelines and training have been introduced to assist front-line officers in processing requests for exemptions based on abuse or neglect, and in handling sensitive information related to abusive situations. Under Canada's settlement program for newcomers, our government provides funding to a variety of organizations that offer programs and services that respond to the specific needs of permanent residents, including immigrant women and their families, who may find themselves in vulnerable situations.

• (1900)

As I mentioned, earlier this year, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration devoted a considerable amount of time meeting with representatives of organizations that provide services to immigrant women, as well as with victims or abuse, at a number of round table discussions across the country.

I and many of the members of the status of women House of Commons committee have done exactly the same: reaching out to immigrant women, finding out exactly what their concerns are and where they find themselves to be the most vulnerable.

These important discussions focused on: domestic violence, polygamy, forced marriage, the immigration process and how to strengthen the protection of these vulnerable women and girls.

These discussions, of course, strongly informed Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act, which was introduced in Parliament just a few weeks ago.

The measures in Bill S-7, which I am sure we will be debating in the near future in this House, would improve the protection and support for vulnerable individuals, especially women and girls, by rendering permanent and temporary residents inadmissible for the practice of polygamy in Canada by strengthening Canadian marriage and criminal laws in order to combat forced and underage marriage, and by ensuring that the defence of provocation would not apply in so-called honour killings and many spousal homicides.

Bill S-7 would be yet another example of our government's commitment to the protection of vulnerable Canadians, particularly immigrant and newcomer women. I look forward to supporting it in this House.

Motion No. 505, the motion on proxy marriage that we are debating today, is another unambiguous example of an initiative that would increase the protection of vulnerable women and girls in the context of the immigration system.

Barring or excluding marriages conducted by proxy, telephone, fax, or Internet for immigration purposes would help prevent the immigration system from facilitating forced marriages conducted by these means and would help reduce the number of vulnerable individuals, principally women and including girls, young women under the age of 18, who are forced into such marriages for immigration purposes.

Why are immigrant women particularly vulnerable to the harm caused by these practices?

For one, they are more likely to lack proficiency in English or French, which can be a barrier to accessing social services and information on their legal rights in an abusive relationship.

They may also lack the economic independence to leave an abusive situation, especially if they are underage.

Victims of forced marriages can face many long-term consequences, including isolation from their communities, strained relationships with family, depression and anxiety. From the perspective of a physician, substantive physical and psychological violence, if they attempt to leave these abusive relationships, can result in long-term medical challenges that they may face well into their older years.

For all these reasons I have outlined today, I urge my hon. colleagues to support Motion No. 505. I look forward to this government taking action to exclude proxy and other non-in-person marriages in the immigration system.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour for me to rise and address the House, especially on a topic that I care about as deeply as the issue of forced marriage and, on a broader level, women's rights.

While the government majority is once again showing off its ability to muddy the debate and create confusion, I will try, through this intervention, to bring a little clarity to our discussion. It is always important to remember the philosophers who have interpreted the world in the past, in order to learn from their reflections and extract the principles that guide our political action. Thus, we learn from Albert Camus that to call things by incorrect names is to add to the world's misery.

Private Members' Business

That expression perfectly sums up the four years of Conservative government majority: adding confusion to misery and suspicion to distress, pretending to act when really they just run around in circles, mixing up words and forgetting the facts. Once again, the text of this motion is a glaring example of this government's intellectual dishonesty when it comes to immigration. I witnessed this firsthand as deputy critic for immigration for three years, and I see the same deficiencies in this motion.

The motion confuses some rather specific and complex concepts, such as forced marriage, arranged marriage and marriage by proxy. It is important to clarify these concepts and to define the terms of the debate by pointing out some fundamental notions.

A forced marriage means that one of the spouses is forced to marry against their will. This is something I witnessed when I worked as a social worker, and I can tell you how horrible it is. This practice is an untenable attack on human dignity, on the dignity of women and in particular on the humanist values set out in section 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which we support.

In the case of arranged marriages, families get together to set up a marriage. Even though this practice may seem outdated to us, at least both spouses are consenting parties. With marriage by proxy, both spouses are also consenting parties. This practice enables two spouses who are separated by circumstance, often in war-torn countries, to get married remotely, but they are both willing, at all times. I think it is terrible that the Conservatives continue to mix up these three practices in their speeches.

As we heard from the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, forced marriages are very rarely conducted by proxy.

With its majority, the government claims to want to fight forced marriage outside of Canada. Okay, that is great. As I said, I think it is an appalling practice that has no place in Canada or anywhere else. However, if the government really intends to prevent forced marriages, why is it attacking proxy marriages? Once again, the government is attacking a problem that does not even exist with all the subtlety of a bull in a china shop. I am quite sure that this document will eventually be added to the endless list of government laws and motions that serve no purpose. There are three reasons for that.

First, the quantitative scope of this phenomenon is extremely limited. I will quote the director general of the immigration branch:

Forced marriages are something...difficult to quantify. The known incidence of forced marriages in the immigration system is quite small, and the instances tend to be anecdotal.

This motion is not supported by any credible data or statistics. Second, this motion establishes a systematic correlation between forced marriage and proxy marriage. Many researchers and workers on the ground have told us that has absolutely no basis in fact.

Ms. Korteweg, a professor of sociology at the University of Toronto, told the committee that the problems of forced marriage cannot be addressed through this motion and that forced marriages are not caused by marriage by proxy.

Basically, this motion would prohibit something that is actually already prohibited. Forced marriages are already prohibited in Canada, and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations already require Citizenship and Immigration Canada to carry out thorough investigations into spousal sponsorships to verify the sincerity of marriages.

● (1910)

To sum up, this motion is not based on any concrete data or statistics and it condemns a non-existent practice that is already prohibited. However, not only is this motion useless, it is actually harmful on many levels.

Despite all the witnesses heard in committee, the Conservatives are using the victims of forced marriage as a pretext for further limiting spousal sponsorships.

This motion confuses facts that have nothing to do with condemning forced marriages. It heaps shame on communities whose culture and traditions are different from our own, even though they don't practice forced marriage.

This motion is problematic because it amends the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations yet again. I must point out that the current 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.

However, 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? The government is well aware of the adverse effects of its constant tinkering, but it does not care. It prefers to indulge 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 goes well beyond forced marriage.

Private Members' Business

We are also asking that a procedure be put in place to 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.

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. Although there are exceptions in cases of violence, witnesses told us that this conditional permanent residence endangers the lives of sponsored women who suffer abuse because they prefer to stay quiet for two years rather than running the risk of losing their permanent residence.

That is the essence of our immigration policy: no delusional thinking, no tolerance for outdated practices such as forced marriage, but understanding and help for those who need it.

This motion creates confusion, fuels prejudice and breeds mistrust. Consequently, I will not support it.

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the motion put forward by the hon. member for Mississauga South.

It is incredibly disturbing that so many women and girls around the world continue to be victims of the inhumane practice of early and forced marriages. Right now, it is estimated that one in three girls in the developing world are married before their 18th birthdays. Disturbingly, some are married as young as five years old. This practice is harmful to girls in several ways.

Early or forced marriages hinder most girls' chances of completing an education, which puts them at even greater risk of violence and isolation. Many girls who enter early or forced marriages also typically have children at a very young age and because their bodies are not yet ready for child birth, it is estimated that approximately 70,000 girls die in labour each and every year.

Clearly, early and forced marriages are very harmful practices that threaten the lives and futures of girls around the world with devastating consequences. In fact, they are violations of human rights that often lead to social isolation, poverty and violence. This barbarism is unacceptable to Canadians. 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 help to do so by disallowing marriages by proxy and other non-in-person marriages in the immigration system. A marriage by proxy is where one or even both participants are not present at the ceremony and are represented by another person. Other forms of this type of marriage can be conducted by telephone, fax or Internet for the purposes of immigration to Canada.

While such marriages are not legally permitted to be performed in Canada, they may be recognized for the purposes of Canadian immigration law when conducted in jurisdictions outside of Canada where these types of marriages are legal. Some visa offices around

the world regularly encounter marriages by proxy as it is a cultural practice in some parts of the world.

The sad truth is that these practices can be used to force individuals, usually women and girls, into non-consensual marriages. Should this motion pass, Citizenship and Immigration Canada will amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations to exclude proxy, telephone and similar forms of marriage for immigration purposes across all immigration streams. In addition, policy and operational guidelines will be updated to assist immigration officers in better detecting such forms of marriage.

Of course, we also recognize there are cases when a marriage by proxy is valid and there will be exceptions in the regulations for these valid types of marriages. Sponsored spouses who decide to marry by proxy will be encouraged to remarry in an in-person ceremony that meets the laws of the country where it is performed to have their marriage accepted for immigration purposes. They can also apply as common law or conjugal partners. Humanitarian and compassionate provisions may also be taken into consideration.

However, the focus of this motion is the increasing concern that some marriages by proxy, telephone, fax, or Internet can make it easier for someone to be forced into a marriage. In addressing the issue of forced marriage in our immigration system, let us also be clear about the intent of this motion. It is not an indictment of arranged marriages. An arranged marriage is a marriage in which both parties have the free will to accept or decline the arrangement.

On the other hand, all forced marriages are, by nature, arranged and when the consent of one of both parties to the marriage is denied, tools such as proxy marriage, telephone marriage and these other means of solemnization may be used to facilitate the forced marriage.

As I have already stated, some of our visa offices have encountered cases of spousal sponsorships that were, in fact, cases of forced marriage facilitated by proxy. This is not how Canada's spousal sponsorship program is intended to work.

Although this barbaric practice of forced marriage is illegal in Canada, we must further strengthen the integrity of our immigration system to ensure we uphold and strengthen the protections of vulnerable women. This is why our government is taking additional steps to ensure it does not occur on our soil.

As we know, the introduction of Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act, would further strengthen the protections for vulnerable women, including those in our immigration system.

• (1915)

Among other measures, it would amend the Criminal Code to further prevent forced or underage marriage. These measures would criminalize: knowingly officiating at an underage or forced marriage; knowingly and actively participating in a wedding ceremony in which one party is marrying another against his or her will, or is under the age of 16 years old; and removing a minor from Canada for a forced or underage marriage.

Private Members' Business

In Canada, there is no national minimum age for marriage. Only in Quebec is the minimum age set at 16 years. In other parts of Canada, if members can even believe it, the common law minimum age varies from as low as 7 years old to 14 years. Setting a national minimum age of 16 years for marriage would make it clear that underage marriage is unacceptable in Canada and will not be tolerated here.

Other proposed amendments would create a new peace bond that would give courts the power to impose conditions on an individual when there is reasonable grounds to fear that a forced marriage or marriage under the age of 16 will otherwise occur. Such a peace bond could be used to require the surrender of a passport as well as to prevent a child from being taken outside of Canada.

Other amendments to the Civil Marriage Act proposed in Bill S-7 would require those getting married to give their free and enlightened consent to the marriage and would codify the requirements of the dissolution of any previous marriage.

Through these and other actions, our government is sending a strong message. Our country will not tolerate cultural traditions in Canada that deprive individuals of their human rights. Our government will continue to stand up for all victims of violence and abuse, and take necessary action to prevent these practices from happening on Canadian soil.

I would like to conclude by highlighting some of the investments that Status of Women has made, giving communities the tools to address harmful cultural practices: since 2007, over \$70 million for projects to prevent and end violence against women and girls; of this amount, \$2.8 million has been invested in projects that address harmful, cultural practices, such as violence committed in the name of so-called honour, forced genital mutilation and forced marriage; the elimination of child, early and forced marriage was a key priority for the Minister of Status of Women to raise as she led Canada's delegation to the 58th meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York earlier this year.

I support these measures and this motion. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important debate and I would like to thank my hon. colleague as well.

• (1920)

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand in the House today to support Motion No. 505 from the hon. member for Mississauga South. The motion would help protect the rights of immigrant women who have been subject to family or societal coercion through the practice of early and forced marriage.

Our government has maintained a strong commitment to strengthening efforts to prevent early and forced marriage, and other harmful cultural practices from happening in Canada. This is part of maintaining our Canadian values.

As members may know, Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act, was recently adopted in the Senate at second reading. The motion we are debating today complements that bill. This is a much-needed motion that would protect vulnerable women and girls.

We already have many protections in place to prevent forced marriages. Individuals, primarily girls and women, but also some boys and men, who are forced into a marriage to which they do not consent can seek help from the Canadian government.

As my hon. colleagues are aware, forced marriages are illegal when performed within our borders. However, there is no protection against marriages performed in other countries, and they can facilitate these forced marriages once those participants are settled in Canada.

I find it unbelievable that the opposition is opposing this motion today, especially when we hear opposition members talk about their supposed commitment to girls and women at the status of women committee. This motion goes to the very heart of that. The opposition members argue that this is not a problem in Canada, that there is no evidence. I am shocked by that. Immigration officials have reported 1,500 forced marriages to us.

It has been reported that a young university girl in my riding of Calgary Centre has been forced to marry a cousin in another country in order to bring him to Canada. This goes on every day in each of our ridings. I want to commend the member for Mississauga South for bringing this forward.

The subject of this motion is to bar the recognition of proxy, telephone, Internet and fax marriages for immigration purposes because these kinds of marriages are right for non-consensual unions.

I grew up in a home in Lloydminster. There were six children, four girls and two boys, and we were all treated equally. I value that in my life and Canadians value it as well. Being treated equally, regardless of our country of origin, our ethnic heritage, our economic circumstance or our gender is a Canadian value.

As I noted earlier, the practice of forced marriage can also victimize men and boys, but it disproportionately encroaches on the rights of women and girls.

In Canada, we are proud of women in leadership roles. The member for Mississauga South is a perfect example of that, as is our Minister of Status of Women, and the former minister of status of women. We have some excellent women leaders here. As members of Parliament, it is incumbent upon us to remember that one of our roles is to help bring other women along and to protect their rights. That is what the member's motion would do.

The cultural practice of forced marriage is a barrier to women. When women and girls are forced to marry someone, this is almost always accompanied by restrictions on other human rights, such as their ability to get an education, find employment and limits on their mobility and freedom. These are all abhorrent to our Canadian values of individual freedom for all.

Our government is working hard to remove obstacles that would deny women opportunities and the chance to expand their wings and really achieve their potential and dreams.

Private Members' Business

I want to quote the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Flavia Pansieri, who equated forced marriage to “the perpetual subjugation of girls and women”, saying that it leaves them vulnerable to physical, psychological, emotional and sexual violence.

● (1925)

At the same UN panel discussion, Kate Gilmore, the deputy executive director of the UN population fund, called such marriages a violation of their human rights. She quoted this shocking statistic that every day, there are 39,000 girls who are married or joined in a union without their free, prior and informed consent, and with no options but to do otherwise.

It is interesting that we are right now marking the 16 days of activism against violence against women because this motion is a perfect example of something we should do to protect the rights of women. These 16 days of activism are all about us talking about these issues. They are issues that are barriers to women in achieving their freedom and potential in our society.

I am proud to see our government taking a lead on this issue. The motion today is a strong step in preventing early and forced marriages, which can often be officiated over the phone, by fax, or by proxy. Imagine a young girl being coerced by someone in the family to be married by Skype to someone she has never met.

I want to be clear that this is what the motion is aimed at. It is aimed at banning marriages that would take place between people who are not in the same room. In Canada we know we have a judge or a religious leader who is there to witness the sacred vow between a man and a woman when a marriage takes place. Part of that witnessing is affirming that those people are there of their own free will.

When we are talking about these proxy marriages, these same criteria do not apply. That is what the motion by the member for Mississauga South is getting at here.

I want to be clear that what we are asking the House to support in the motion is a change in the regulations. This would help prevent the immigration system from facilitating forced marriages by having marriages conducted by proxy, by telephone, by fax and by Internet as a means for them gaining immigration status, which is exactly the case in my riding that I cited.

This family is wishing to have one of the family members brought to Canada as an immigrant and plans to marry-off their daughter to her cousin in order to facilitate that. That is wrong. That goes against Canadian values and that is exactly what my colleague's motion gets at.

This is not a broad brush that is being used to paint other forms of marriage, like arranged marriages, in the same way. Arranged marriages can work. I have friends who have arranged marriages that have worked very well. An arranged marriage is a kind of marriage where families select their sons and daughters to join in matrimony. Often this takes place over many years with families that have known each other for a long time, where both parties do have the free will to accept or reject the arrangement.

The motion we are discussing today would not affect these marriages in any way. This motion proposes that Canada would no longer recognize marriages by proxy for immigration purposes, a practice that is too frequently used as a tool to disguise a forced marriage as one that would appear legitimate on paper.

In a marriage by proxy, one or both of the participants are not present and they are represented by a third party. Who is to know if they have given informed consent? It is a system that is ripe for misuse. These marriages are conducted in a number of ways, including, for example, by fax. There are few of us who would trust one of the most important events in our lives to be done by fax.

These marriages are not recognized legally when they are performed in Canada, nor should they be recognized in Canada when they are performed somewhere else. We must be consistent and clear with the people of Canada that forced marriages are wrong, regardless of borders, cultures or traditions.

The motion makes clear that there would still be measures for those who were married previously by proxy, but who are nonetheless in genuine relationships. They can have their marriages considered for immigration purposes. There are also humanitarian or compassionate provisions that have been taken into consideration.

We would also protect the legitimate use of marriage by proxy and similar marriages for members of the Canadian Armed Forces in active military service.

● (1930)

To conclude, this motion would exclude from the immigration system practices that would harm vulnerable women and girls, practices that could treat them like chattel, practices that are unacceptable in Canada. These practices are incompatible with Canadian values and will not be tolerated.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Mississauga South will now have her five minutes of reply.

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to reply, and I would like to thank all members who kindly spoke to my motion.

First of all, let me clarify some comments that were made by a couple of members in the opposition. I would like to thank the members, but there was mention of a confusing message in the motion, so I want to make sure that the members opposite understand that this is an important issue. I do not believe there is confusion with regard to my motion. I would be happy to talk to them about it. I think the motion is very clear in asking the government to put in place a regulation to disallow, for the purposes of immigration, telephone, fax, Internet, and proxy marriages.

The member from the Liberal Party mentioned that he deals with this regularly, and he gave some examples. One of the examples he gave was of marriages that were not recognized in Canada and took place in another country. I would like to say that the remedy for that is quite simple. I would encourage couples in that situation to either come to Canada or the country where one of the spouses lives to be married and hold a ceremony with a presiding official.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is important that we uphold our Canadian values and that we recognize that being in the same room is a fairly simple criterion to meet when two people are getting married. In the example that the Liberal member gave, that couple would then be free to apply for a spousal application, just like anyone else, and the recommended regulation in my motion would not apply.

I note that he asked why there might be a need for a legislative change, so I want to clarify that my motion is asking for a regulatory change. I do agree with him that this is an important issue and that there is the bigger issue of forced marriage. A couple of our other colleagues mentioned that as well. Telephone, fax, Internet, and proxy marriages are really only one small piece of the puzzle. This is just one loophole that I am seeking to close.

I do hope that clarifies some of the member's questions and misunderstandings, and that he can support the motion.

The NDP member opposite said that she disagrees with the motion because she does not see the need for it and that there are very few applications put forward in this manner. I would like to tell the member opposite that, in fact, we are talking about hundreds every year, and possibly over a thousand. This is not a tiny problem. It is actually a fairly common issue that our visa officers around the world deal with. As I said, I am seeking to close that loophole.

It would not ban something that is already banned. It is correct that these types of marriages are not legitimate on Canadian soil and do not take place here, but that is not what the motion seeks to ban. The motion seeks to disallow these marriages when they take place elsewhere for the purposes of immigration. I want to make that very clear to all members. I do believe this motion would help prevent fraud, and thus would of course serve a purpose.

Lastly, I would like to thank the member for Calgary Centre for talking about the coercive aspect, for helping me to clarify some of the misconceptions, and for mentioning the exemption for active military service.

•(1935)

I would like to thank the Minister of Status of Women and the member for London North Centre for speaking to my motion and for their support.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93 made on Tuesday, November 25, 2014, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 10, 2014, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

•(1940)

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the people of Quebec on this important issue. I am obviously speaking of the Quebec City Armoury.

On October 31, I asked a simple question in the House: Quebecers have been waiting over ten years for the government to refurbish the Quebec City Armoury. They waited for six years, almost seven, for an answer that would allow them to go ahead with other tourism and cultural projects that are very promising for Quebec City. Having waited over six years, can they finally believe the minister when she says that the work really will begin in 2015 and will be completed for the 150th anniversary celebration in 2017? We asked: When will we see a backhoe on the armoury grounds?

Now we are being told that work will begin in summer 2015. We learned that the department planned to have a backhoe on the Plains of Abraham in summer 2015. The 150th anniversary celebrations will take place in summer 2017. That is a short timeframe.

I have good reason to be skeptical, since even the department itself acknowledges that the deadline is very tight and that, given its complexity, the armoury project will require an extremely skilled workforce. We are talking about expertise in masonry, tinsmithing, metal roofing and heritage woodworking to maintain the historic style of the Quebec City Armoury. This is a heritage gem that is of crucial importance to Quebec City; it is located next to the Plains of Abraham, which of course are very historic. We must not cut corners here. This must be beautifully and properly done, and it must be done now.

It is appalling that we have had to wait all these years, more than six years in fact, as though this was not important to Quebec City. The people of Quebec City are feeling abandoned on this matter. It seems that the Conservative government, which promised to rebuild the armoury in both the 2008 and 2011 election campaigns, might have to make the same election promise again next time. People are fed up. Frankly, it makes no sense. I deplore this attitude, because it is absolutely ridiculous.

Adjournment Proceedings

The deadline is extremely tight for a project as complex as the armoury, because it is a heritage building. I therefore think it is unfortunate that the government did not allow for contingencies. Unforeseen circumstances may arise. The Plains of Abraham was a battlefield. During the reconstruction, artifacts or even bones may be found. When the labour schedule was drawn up to ensure that the work on the armoury is finished by the summer of 2017 for the 150th anniversary celebrations, was any time allotted to deal with unforeseen circumstances? If something unforeseen does happen, will it throw off the entire schedule so that the scaffolds will be up all around the armoury for another five years and for the 150th anniversary celebrations?

Is that what Quebec City deserves? I say no. It does not make sense that the Conservatives abandoned Quebec City when they promised not to drop this file.

This evening, I am asking for a straight answer because this situation is really shameful. The armoury is an important part of our heritage.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the member for Québec. I welcome the fact that she asked for an adjournment debate on this question.

In fact, the government knows that there is a great deal of interest in Quebec City in this very project, and for good reason. It is one of our historical treasures here in Canada. The government recognizes the importance that Quebecers, and in fact all Canadians, place on the Quebec armoury.

The armoury is expected to offer a space for the Voltigeurs of Quebec regiment to use for ceremonial and administrative purposes. The proud history of the Voltigeurs, Canada's oldest French-Canadian infantry regiment, will be preserved.

Infrastructure forms an important pillar in the Canada First defence strategy. In line with that, we are moving to replace or refurbish a significant portion of our defence facilities.

The Department of National Defence holds a large number of properties to support the Canadian Armed Forces, including some 21,000 buildings and 800 parcels of land covering 2.25 million hectares. Let me assure the member opposite and this House that the building will showcase the proud military history of the armoury, remind people of its cultural importance, and at the same time remain accessible to the public.

In April 2008, a fire damaged the Grande-Allée Armoury in Quebec City. The armoury is an historic site and has received heritage building recognition by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office. The armoury served as home to the Canadian Armed Forces regiment les Voltigeurs de Québec, and it will continue to play a significant role for our cherished regiment.

Immediately after the fire, our government committed to rebuilding this important building in the heart of Quebec City through significant investments under Canada's economic action plan. These investments are an investment in growth, job creation, and long-term prosperity for Quebec City.

The armoury will be rebuilt as a multi-purpose building. The facility design provides for areas commemorating the military history of the armoury, federal government offices, and multi-purpose space accessible to the public. As previously mentioned, it is also expected that the facility will serve as the administrative and ceremonial home of the Voltigeurs regiment.

There have been consultations with the stakeholders involved, and our government has announced when various contracts were awarded or when major milestones have been achieved. We remain committed to continuing on this path. Officials have advised us that according to the current timeline, work will begin in 2015 and should be completed in 2017. Once it is rebuilt, the *Manège militaire* will reflect the beautiful city of Quebec, a city rich in the early history of Canada. It will be as beautiful as any work of art, but living and vibrant and looking to the future.

It is good news for the local economy, good news for the Canadian military, and good news for the city of Quebec.

• (1945)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Annick Papillon: Mr. Speaker, I am very familiar with the armoury, as I live just a few steps away. I have lived there for many years. I am originally from Quebec City, so I am obviously familiar with the history of the armoury.

The problem is with what the Conservative government did. This armoury caught fire in April 2008. Budget after budget after budget after budget, this government did nothing. It has not taken action and it is leaving gutted buildings in a key area for tourism in Quebec City. That is absolutely shameful. The government tells us to wait. Quebec City is tired of waiting. We want this armoury ready as soon as possible.

I do not think that the government understands that we are on a very tight schedule now, since it is complicated to organize all of the highly specialized workers for this project, and there will not be enough time if unforeseen circumstances arise. Unforeseen circumstances always arise. We are in politics, and everyone here should know that unforeseen circumstances always arise. We do not understand. There will be scaffolding during Quebec City's Carnival in 2017, for sure. However, I do hope it will be gone by the summer of 2017.

I expect some serious answers. The same goes for the Quebec Bridge. That is a heritage gem that is part of the very identity of Quebec City, which is incredible. This government needs to take action and needs to understand the historic importance of the most beautiful capital in North America.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member for Québec that we want to make sure we get this right. We want to make sure that it still encompasses all the great history that is there and that it is still a tourist attraction, as the member alluded to.

Adjournment Proceedings

Our government is proud to support the reconstruction of the Grande-Allée Armoury, a centrepiece of Quebec City's rich architectural landscape and its proud military past. The reconstruction of this national historic site of Canada will generate jobs in Quebec and culminate in an exciting new space that will host cultural and community activities, provide government offices, and be a tribute to the Voltigeurs de Québec.

Officials expect that reconstruction will begin in 2015, once a construction company has been chosen, and completion of the work is expected in 2017. Through this project we are supporting local jobs in Quebec City and allowing all to enjoy the armoury for years to come.

This is good news for the local economy, good news for the Canadian military, and great news for the city of Quebec.

• (1950)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to talk about Canada's Species at Risk Act.

This week, COSEWIC stated that the status of the beluga, a very important species that inhabits the St. Lawrence and is a symbol of Quebec and even Canada, has changed from threatened to endangered because the beluga whale population is dropping steadily. The government will soon have to protect the beluga habitat.

I hope that the Government of Canada will add its 15-year-old proposed marine protected area to this year's list of priorities.

I would like to revisit the question I asked the Minister of the Environment on November 18 about the government's pathetic track record on protecting species at risk.

As I am sure some people know, an important report was released in November about trends in extinction risk for species in Canada. The report outlines the complete failure of the Conservative government to fulfill its duties under the Species at Risk Act.

Of the 369 plant and animal species identified as endangered in 1997, 115 have seen their population drop further and 202 are still endangered. There is therefore still a lot of work to be done. This report, which was written by biologists from the University of Victoria and the Raincoast Conservation Foundation, was recently published in *PLOS ONE*.

That is pretty serious. People are becoming aware of the Conservative government's failure in this area. More and more often, wildlife protection groups have to go to court simply to get the government to respect the law. A report issued by the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development in 2013 had already sounded the alarm, but unfortunately, the Conservative government chose to ignore it.

Nevertheless, this report indicated that we have a major problem and that, at the time, the Conservative government was protecting only seven of the 518 species at risk on the list. The Conservatives cannot boast about doing good work when they are protecting only seven out of 518 species. We have a very serious problem.

What is more, the commissioner said that, at that rate, it would take 10 years to complete the outstanding recovery strategies, and that estimate did not include the new species that are being added to the list and that must be protected.

Indeed, concrete action is needed, and we need to provide human, scientific and financial resources to immediately support the Species at Risk Act.

I look forward to hearing what the member has to say on this matter.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to respond to the question from the member for Drummond.

In a previous Parliament I chaired the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, which did the statutory review of the Species at Risk Act at the time, a review that I understand is going to recur.

Our government takes the matter of species at risk very seriously and is taking action to conserve our species at risk and their habitats. Using the best available community, aboriginal traditional, and scientific knowledge, and working co-operatively with all Canadians, we are taking action now that will make a difference for nature today and tomorrow. Our government has posted recovery strategies and management plans for a number of species. We continue to share science on species at risk with the provinces and help them inform their decisions. We are working closely with landowners, environmental organizations, industry, and aboriginal groups, as well as with the provinces and territories that are responsible for the protection of species at risk on provincial lands. We also launched a national conservation plan that provides a national vision to advance conservation efforts right across the country.

Indeed, on May 15, 2014, our Prime Minister launched the national conservation plan, which provides a national vision to advance conservation efforts across the country. This includes \$50 million over the next five years to support voluntary actions to restore and conserve species at risk and their habitats; and another \$50 million to restore wetlands, which will benefit ecosystems and the species that depend on wetlands, a number of which are now at risk.

The funding to support voluntary actions will expand two existing programs, the habitat stewardship program and the aboriginal fund for species at risk. Together, they have supported hundreds of recovery projects across the country. Since its inception, the habitat stewardship program has contributed over \$127 million to 2,178 local conservation projects. The aboriginal fund for species at risk has contributed nearly \$22 million to 631 conservation and recovery projects.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Species at Risk Act is one of the Canadian government's main conservation tools to protect species at risk, making healthy ecosystems and preserving Canada's natural heritage. This act supplements existing federal, provincial, and territorial laws governing the protection of animal and plant species and their habitats. Actions that benefit species at risk are also being taken under these other acts.

As part of the government's commitment to preserve Canada's biodiversity, we are working hard on the implementation of the Species at Risk Act, and have been aggressively addressing the backlog of species requiring recovery planning. Environment Canada has significantly accelerated our progress in recent years. Since January 1, 2011, we have published 94 recovery strategies and management plans. In addition, we will significantly reduce the number of species requiring a recovery document over the next three years.

• (1955)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to know that my colleague was a member of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development. I hope he can put down his notes and explain two things to me.

One-third of Parks Canada scientists have been let go. How, then, can we implement recovery plans for species at risk, when we do not have the scientists to implement them? I hope he will put down his notes and answer me.

Moreover, there have been calls to create a marine protected area for the St. Lawrence for 15 years now. The beluga, which was once a threatened species, is now an endangered species.

I am not asking the parliamentary secretary to make any promises. However, does he not think it would be wise, after 15 years of

concerted efforts, and now that everyone agrees, to create that marine protected area for the St. Lawrence to protect belugas? I hope to get an answer from him.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, we are investing in and putting in place the regulations and the conservation and recovery plans for species at risk. It is important to note that actions that protect and conserve species at risk do not depend solely on the listing and preparation and posting of recovery documents under the Species at Risk Act. As I said before, there is also joint collaboration with the provinces, the territories, and local communities to make these happen. There are many other actions that we are undertaking as well to conserve and recover species at risk.

Furthermore, the responsibilities for the survival and recovery of species at risk is not, as I have just said, uniquely federal. Our actions are complemented by the provinces and territories. We share the responsibility of conservation, especially on provincial lands and in working with landowners, since land is within their jurisdiction. They have the primary role in protecting wildlife and for the management of wildlife on provincial and private land. This is reflected in the Species at Risk Act itself, and the federal government works co-operatively with the provinces and the territories on species at risk in order to avoid duplication of effort and to coordinate the efforts to protect species. Canadian industry and ordinary citizens also have an important role in stewardship.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, December 3, 2014

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Persons with Disabilities	
Ms. Perreault	10111
Health Care	
Mr. Keddy	10111
Persons with Disabilities	
Mr. Sullivan	10111
Charitable Giving	
Mr. Richards	10112
Housing	
Mr. Vaughan	10112
North Vancouver	
Mr. Saxton	10112
Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord Fundraising Campaign	
Mr. Tremblay	10112
Journey Neighbourhood Centre	
Mr. Seeback	10112
Charitable Giving	
Mr. Warkentin	10113
Jean Béliveau	
Mr. Dubé	10113
Taxation	
Mr. Chisu	10113
Parkdale Anti-Violence Education Working Group	
Ms. Nash	10113
International Trade	
Mr. Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	10114
Jean Béliveau	
Mr. Trudeau	10114
Jean Béliveau	
Mr. Gourde	10114
Conservative Party of Canada	
Mr. Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	10114
Taxation	
Mr. Carmichael	10114

ORAL QUESTIONS

Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Mulcair	10115
Mr. Harper	10115
Mr. Mulcair	10115
Mr. Harper	10115
Mr. Mulcair	10115
Mr. Harper	10115
Mr. Mulcair	10115

Mr. Harper	10115
Health	
Mr. Mulcair	10115
Mr. Harper	10115
Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Trudeau	10116
Mr. Harper	10116
Mr. Trudeau	10116
Mr. Harper	10116
Public Safety	
Mr. Trudeau	10116
Mr. Harper	10116
The Environment	
Mr. Choquette	10116
Mrs. Aglukkaq	10116
Ms. Leslie	10117
Mrs. Aglukkaq	10117
Ms. Leslie	10117
Mrs. Aglukkaq	10117
Ms. Leslie	10117
Mrs. Aglukkaq	10117
Ms. Leslie	10117
Mrs. Aglukkaq	10117
Ms. Leslie	10117
Mrs. Aglukkaq	10117
Ethics	
Mr. Angus	10117
Mr. Calandra	10118
Mr. Angus	10118
Mr. Calandra	10118
Ms. Péclet	10118
Mr. Calandra	10118
Government Accountability	
Mr. Julian	10118
Mr. Van Loan	10118
Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Valeriote	10118
Mr. Fantino	10119
Mr. Valeriote	10119
Mr. Fantino	10119
Mr. Valeriote	10119
Mr. Fantino	10119
Persons with Disabilities	
Mrs. Groguhé	10119
Ms. Bergen	10119
Mr. Sullivan	10119
Ms. Bergen	10120
Agriculture and Agri-Food	
Mr. Allen (Welland)	10120
Mr. Ritz	10120
Mr. Martin	10120
Mr. Ritz	10120

Persons with Disabilities	
Mr. McColeman	10120
Ms. Bergen	10120
Science and Technology	
Ms. Quach	10120
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	10120
Ms. Nash	10121
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	10121
Justice	
Ms. Crowder	10121
Mr. MacKay	10121
Ms. Crowder	10121
Mr. MacKay	10121
Northern Development	
Ms. Jones	10121
Mrs. Aglukkaq	10121
The Environment	
Mr. Dion	10122
Mrs. Shea	10122
Canadian Heritage	
Mr. Dewar	10122
Mrs. Glover	10122
Ms. Turmel	10122
Mrs. Glover	10122
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Opitz	10122
Mr. Bezan	10122
Canadian Heritage	
Mr. Regan	10123
Mrs. Aglukkaq	10123
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Garrison	10123
Mr. Alexander	10123
International Development	
Mr. Sweet	10123
Mr. Obhrai	10123
International Trade	
Ms. Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	10123
Mr. Bernier	10123
The Environment	
Mr. Hyer	10124
Mrs. Aglukkaq	10124
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	10124
Jean Béliveau	
Mr. Mulcair	10124
Motion	10124
(Motion agreed to)	10124

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lukiwski	10124

Interparliamentary Delegations	
Mr. Toone	10124
Mrs. Gallant	10124

Committees of the House	
Justice and Human Rights	
Mr. Wallace	10124

Criminal Code	
Ms. Young (Vancouver South)	10125
Bill C-639. Introduction and first reading	10125
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	10125

Committees of the House	
Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Preston	10125
Motion for concurrence	10125
(Motion agreed to)	10125

Petitions	
Sex Selection	
Mr. Cannan	10125
Canada Post	
Mr. Simms	10125
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Mr. Chong	10125
Impaired Driving	
Mr. Breitzkreuz	10125
Sex Selection	
Mr. Galipeau	10125
CBC/Radio Canada	
Mr. Hyer	10126
Pensions	
Mr. Lamoureux	10126
Impaired Driving	
Mrs. Ambler	10126
Consumer Product Safety	
Ms. May	10126
Terrorism	
Ms. May	10126
Impaired Driving	
Ms. Young (Vancouver South)	10126

Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Lukiwski	10126

Motions for Papers	
Mr. Lukiwski	10128

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply	
Opposition Motion—Proportional Representation	
Mr. Scott	10128
Motion	10128
Mr. Chong	10129
Mr. Lamoureux	10130
Ms. Latendresse	10130
Mr. Preston	10131
Mr. Vaughan	10132
Ms. Nash	10132

Mr. Poilievre	10132	(Schedule 1 agreed to)	10147
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	10134	(Schedule 2 agreed to)	10147
Ms. Jones	10134	(Clause 1 agreed to)	10147
Mr. Chong	10135	(Preamble agreed to)	10147
Mr. Scott	10135	(Title agreed to)	10147
Mr. Lamoureux	10135	(Bill agreed to)	10147
Mr. Simms	10135	(Bill reported)	10147
Mr. Scott	10138	Motion for concurrence	10147
Mr. Chong	10138	Motion agreed to	10148
Mr. Vaughan	10138	Third reading	10149
Mr. Lapointe	10139	Motion agreed to	10150
Ms. Crowder	10139	(Bill read the third time and passed)	10150
Mr. Lunney	10141		
Mr. Vaughan	10141		
Rouge National Urban Park			
Bill C-40—Notice of Time Allocation			
Mr. Van Loan	10142		
Economic Action Plan 2014 Act, No. 2			
Bill C-43—Notice of Time Allocation			
Mr. Van Loan	10142		
Business of Supply			
Opposition Motion—Proportional Representation			
Motion	10142		
Mr. Dewar	10142		
Motion negatived	10144		
Supplementary Estimates (B), 2014-15			
Concurrence in Vote 1b—Veterans Affairs			
Mr. Clement	10144		
Motion	10144		
(Motion agreed to)	10144		
Motion for concurrence	10144		
Motion agreed to	10146		
Bill C-45. First reading	10146		
(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time) ..	10146		
Second reading	10146		
Motion agreed to	10147		
(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mr. Joe Comartin in the chair)	10147		
Mr. Ravignat	10147		
(On clause 2)	10147		
Mr. Clement	10147		
(Clause 2 agreed to)	10147		
(Clause 3 agreed to)	10147		
(Clause 4 agreed to)	10147		
(Clause 5 agreed to)	10147		
(Clause 6 agreed to)	10147		
(Clause 7 agreed to)	10147		
		(Schedule 1 agreed to)	10147
		(Schedule 2 agreed to)	10147
		(Clause 1 agreed to)	10147
		(Preamble agreed to)	10147
		(Title agreed to)	10147
		(Bill agreed to)	10147
		(Bill reported)	10147
		Motion for concurrence	10147
		Motion agreed to	10148
		Third reading	10149
		Motion agreed to	10150
		(Bill read the third time and passed)	10150
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS			
Department of Public Works and Government Services Act			
		Bill C-574. Second reading	10150
		Motion negatived	10151
Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security Act			
		Bill C-591. Third reading	10151
		Motion agreed to	10152
		(Bill read the third time and passed)	10152
Main Point of Contact with the Government of Canada in case of Death Act			
		Bill C-247. Third reading	10152
		Motion agreed to	10153
		(Bill read the third time and passed)	10153
Lincoln Alexander Day			
		Bill S-213. Third reading	10153
		Motion agreed to	10154
		(Bill read the third time and passed)	10154
Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations			
		Motion	10154
		Mr. Lamoureux	10154
		Ms. Leitch	10155
		Mrs. Groguhé	10156
		Mrs. Truppe	10158
		Ms. Crockatt	10159
		Mrs. Ambler	10160
ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS			
National Defence			
		Ms. Papillon	10161
		Mr. Bezan	10162
The Environment			
		Mr. Choquette	10163
		Mr. Bezan	10163

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