



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, February 19, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 19, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C), 2014-2015

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (C) for the financial year ending March 31, 2015, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

* * *

• (1005)
[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 responses to three petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-26, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act and the Sex Offender Information Registration Act, to enact the High Risk Child Sex Offender Database Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

* * *

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-654, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (omnibus bills).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have been an MP now for seventeen and a half years, and I have to be honest with my constituents and the

people of Canada that I am here under false pretenses, and so is every single one of the members of Parliament in this House.

Our number one responsibility, when it comes to legislation, is the fiscal scrutiny of all legislation that leaves this House. However, when legislation comes forward with 418 pages that would change 50 statutes and laws, nobody in the House of Commons reads it. Nobody in the House of Commons properly does the job we need to do to have fiscal scrutiny of the government.

My bill would stop omnibus legislation from coming in. Legislation could only be introduced if attachments were related to the subject matter. One could not introduce legislation that had nothing to do with the subject matter at hand.

This practice has to stop in the House of Commons. We have to restore democracy to the Canadian people.

I am proud to say that we in the NDP want to stop the bus when it comes to omnibus bill legislation.

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I move that the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, presented on Monday, May 5, 2014, be concurred in.

I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Jeanne-Le Ber, and I look forward to his comments. He has a wise view of the world. I have been on the subcommittee on human rights with him for a number of years now.

The reason this particular report will resonate in this place is because of the things that are happening in the Middle East right now, particularly with respect to Boko Haram, which, as members will know, has kidnapped a number of young women. In some instances, they have been sold off as brides, and in other instances, they have been abused. I will not go into the details.

Routine Proceedings

The report I am referring to came out of the subcommittee on international human rights back in May 2014. The title was “A Weapon of War: Rape and Sexual Violence Against Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo”. It speaks about Canada's role in taking action to end impunity. This report went on to the foreign affairs committee, of which we are a sub-body, and it was passed in its committee's fourth report.

It is crucial to understand that war as it was known for many generations has changed. An aspect of war that might have been at one time viewed, particularly by us in the west, as being horrendous is now almost an acceptable practice. As the title of this report says, rape is being used as a weapon. It is being used to humiliate and to embarrass.

I want to read a bit of the executive summary of the report:

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis at the national and international levels around the need to prevent and address widespread sexual violence in situations of conflict and crisis.

The report talks specifically about the war in Congo. Members have to understand that when there is a breakdown of government that comes about when there is a major catastrophe, such as an earthquake, and an example that comes to mind is Haiti, and there is a period of time when people are homeless and living in refugee-style camps and in environments that are far below the standard of living they are used to, changes for people at times like that lead to sexual violence and violence against women.

It has been noted that in the western world, one in four males abuses a spouse. The added pressure of a crisis is in no way a justification. It is simply a statement of the facts.

The subcommittee held a number of hearings on this issue, and over the course of those hearings, we were told of many of the misconceptions about conflict-related violence. We were also told that there are gaps in the policy response that contribute to the pervasive nature of this particular problem.

At the beginning of the report, we refer to impunity. Should one of the troops in a normal army commit an assault or a rape, or even sexual harassment, the expectation is that the person would be called before a commanding officer to account for such abusive behaviour. However, in some militaries in some countries in the world, it is seen as a reward for service. It is also seen when there are tribal-type conflicts where the family of one's opposition is shamed by the rape of a daughter or wife, a niece or a mother. We do not even begin to understand that process. That is why this debate is important.

● (1010)

If we stop to consider the Rwanda genocide, some 20 years ago, with one group of people versus another, the slaughter was unbelievable. Romeo Dallaire, the Canadian general at the time, was in command, and he wrote a book, *Shake Hands With the Devil*, which outlined the things that happened in that war.

Today there are tens of thousands of children who are 20 years old who are the result of the rapes during that time. We have had testimony before our committee about what has happened to them in their lifetimes and how the mothers, who were shamed by multiple rapes and attacks, had children with no idea who the fathers were. The tendency of the government of the day in Rwanda, and the

tendency of the victims, was to hide this and not discuss it. Of course, that makes the problem for the direct victim, the mother, that much worse.

We all understand that for post-traumatic stress healing, victims have to verbalize what has happened to them. They have to lay out before someone the pain they are suffering. However, oftentimes, little account is given to the other victim, the child. Oftentimes they are in mixed tribes with the two tribes involved in that conflict, and neither side wishes to even deal with that young person.

We have had a number of these child victims grow up and immigrate to Canada. In Hamilton we were marking the anniversary of the genocide not that long ago, and one of those children was there. It was a very poignant moment to listen to that person give testimony as to what happened to them, to their mothers, and to their families. Families were destroyed. The way one individual described it was that his mother was numb. He grew up with no sense of comfort or feeling from his mother because of that attack that had been so vicious.

It is important for us to understand that although that particular conflict was 20 years ago, today, in this world, this is happening on a much larger scale.

In addressing the issue of impunity for those people who think they can undertake such terrible actions, members may note that I am hesitating a bit, because I am having difficulty finding the words.

An hon. member: Read the page in front of you.

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, someone just said “Read the page in front of you”. The page in front of me is the report. I can read that quite capably. I thank him very much.

This is not a joking matter. We are talking about the lives of men, women, and children that are destroyed by the aggression and actions that somehow have been connected to combat, when they have nothing to do with combat. They have to do with the victimization of women by the power men have. These particular men, of course, are armed with weapons and are able to intimidate and are able to put people into circumstances that they would never in their lifetimes have anticipated.

In the fold of all of this there are rights we take for granted. There is the right to gain a living. Rape victims, in many of these countries, following the attack, do not have the physical or mental capacity to continue with work, which then affects their standard of living and their children.

One of the ramifications of the Rwanda genocide is that those children of rape failed to get an education. One would not normally consider that an offshoot of rape would be that the child would not even be able to get an education.

Routine Proceedings

•(1015)

That is not directly contained in this particular report. However, the reports we are looking at now talk about the fact that perhaps Canada has a role in countries where there has been rape as a result of war, where there has been a child born who we could help with the understanding and the mental support that both victims need, and also with some form of aid for education. Perhaps we could put in place support mechanisms for those children who have come to Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the member with respect to the Democratic Republic of Congo. If we look at the actual number of rapes that have taken place, it has been horrific. Also, the impact of violence against children should be noted. If we look at the situation, at one point it was estimated that close to 50 rapes were taking place in the Democratic Republic of Congo every hour. Given that amount of violence, there is no doubt that one effective way to counter that is through education. The member made reference to aid and how Canada might be able to influence and have more of a positive impact there. When looking at the issue of foreign aid, we need to look at and take into consideration the social benefits.

My question for the member is this. To what degree does he believe Canada could play a stronger role? Does he believe it is by providing aid and support in the form of education because education can empower and help transform?

•(1020)

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, there are many levels to this. One of the levels where Canada could help is certainly at the cultural end. However, the justice and military justice systems in most of these countries are failing the victims, so that would be an area where we could be of assistance.

The education I was referring to was with respect to educating the children who were born and on whom the community has turned its back. We have to get a conversation started that allows women to respond and to have some form of healing. There is a certain level of education there, perhaps psychological. In the past, Canada has provided funding in those cases. I would encourage that it continue.

There are many fronts to this. Right now this is happening in many countries that are experiencing conflicts.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

Of course we are all very moved by all of this violence against women, especially considering that rape is being used as a weapon of war and has been for years.

Clearly that is unacceptable, and Canada really must do its part in these conflicts, especially in terms of protecting women, the most vulnerable people in our societies.

It is also clear that people act with a kind of impunity in these conflict zones. Unfortunately, because of that, the men who commit these crimes are never arrested for their crimes or tried in court.

I would like to hear from my colleague about how we can finally see real justice in these conflict zones.

[*English*]

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, that is an important point. When it comes to impunity, we have soldiers who believe they have been granted permission—in fact, encouragement—to shame their opponents, including their families and wives. In doing this, they think they are doing what their government and military wants. In my view, we have to hold accountable those officers and military leaders who are not just allowing but encouraging this to happen. Until we take those people before international courts and they feel the full weight of international justice, then there is no encouragement from the top to change that behaviour.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in the House to speak to this matter.

As my colleague said at the beginning of his speech, we have been colleagues on the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. I am very proud to be there with him.

[*English*]

This report is the beginning of a very important discussion, the report called “A Weapon of War: Rape and Sexual Violence Against Women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”.

Rape is a very hard word. The word “rape”, even as I stand here, is very hard to say. One is inclined to find euphemisms and so forth or try to talk around it, but it is very important that we understand it. It is very important that we understand these actions, not in a western concept, not in a concept of a criminal act that is perpetrated against a woman, and when this act happens, we hope that the victims can find support through their families and find support through various organization that we have here. It is a different thing altogether.

The purpose of these acts of rape, as it is used in a situation like this, as it is used in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as it was used in the Rwandan genocide—and I am proud to have brought forward a motion to study that, and we have just completed a study on the aftermath of the effect of rape during the Rwandan genocide—is to not simply humiliate, but to destroy communities, to destroy families, to create a situation where those communities cannot rebuild, to create a situation where women cannot look at their children. There is no parental bond between mother and child; and it is mother and child, because the father is not in the picture, because the father is the rapist.

In many cases, from the testimony we heard in this study as well as the study of the aftermath of the Rwandan crisis, children grew up not knowing who their father was, because the women were too ashamed to tell them that they were half of the opposing tribe—for lack of a better way of putting it—that their blood was mixed with the enemy's blood, with the violleur's blood, with that of the organization or the group that committed these atrocities. The relationship between the mother and child is non-existent. The relationship between that child and the community is non-existent. This type of action, this type of weapon that is used against women and against communities in these types of conflict has far-reaching effects.

Routine Proceedings

We have talked about what role Canada can play in situations of this nature, and there are a number of recommendations that are laid out in this report; but in the sister studies that we are doing where this has happened in other nations, things like education come up, as the member for Winnipeg North brought up.

The issue is that although education is extremely important—for example, in the Rwandan situation—these children, these young adults, who have had no service because they are not considered victims of the Rwandan genocide, have no access to education to start to turn their lives around.

We have a situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have a situation in Syria, as we speak, where these types of acts are going on.

● (1025)

I hope every member takes the time to read this report. One of the things we need to start asking about, with regard to how Canada can help, is resources. I am not simply talking about monetary resources, but skill sets and lending the abilities that we have in psychological healing and adapting those practices to the cultural communities that are affected. We can begin to help heal and create the bonds between the mother and the offspring of this violent act. We can help create the bonds between the victims and their communities.

One of the things I hope we can gather from this report is that it takes a little more than condemnation, expressing outrage, and saying that this is a bad thing. It takes stepping in and asking what we can do to help and how we can better prepare ourselves for what is coming in the future.

This is still going on. It is still going on in the DRC. It is going on in Syria and Iraq, over and above the other atrocities we hear about in the House on a daily basis. This has a long, far-reaching effect on both the community as a whole and, as a result, the world as a whole.

In the report, we talk about the need to create equality within the communities and have women brought into decision-making positions. This is a very important aspect of what can be done to strengthen communities. Unfortunately, the role and the aim of rape used as an act of violence in war is to destroy these communities, no matter what position women hold.

In the west, we still have a tendency to look at acts like this as the spoils of war. We need to change how we see these types of act and see them for what they are. They are as dangerous and as deadly as cluster bombs. They are as dangerous and as deadly as machine gun fire. They are as dangerous and as deadly as an atomic bomb in a community. Picking up the pieces after something that drastic is not an easy task.

We, in government and in Canada, have to look at how we can use the expertise that we have, learn from other nations as well, and collaborate and coordinate that expertise so that when this happens again—and mark my words, this will happen again—we as a nation can go and offer our services, our help, and our companionship to these nations, to help heal them.

In terms of what can be done, because prevention is always something that is paramount, how do we get to a point where we can stop this from happening? I really do not know. However, one of the

things we can do in situations where this could possibly happen is make sure we create safe havens for women, girls, and boys, where they are thoroughly protected by United Nations troops or whoever is deemed capable of protecting these camps, where women can go and be protected.

I encourage every member in the House to read this report, consider its recommendations, and consider the ramifications of the testimony that is found within it.

● (1030)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the educational component, and I believe that if we want to make a difference when we deal with issues of this nature and this large in scope, we cannot underestimate the power of education. I believe Canada as a nation has incredible influence around the world, in some areas more than others, and it has a leadership role to play.

My question to the member is this: would he agree, given Canada's stature in foreign affairs and the potential influence it has, that if we approach countries like the Republic of the Congo, we can exert some influence in emphasizing the importance of education? At the end of the day, if we want to affect the lives of young children and young women, we have to ensure that there is more education about family violence and its negative outcomes for any nation around the world.

Maybe he could provide further comment in terms of a potential leadership role Canada could play if it chose to do so.

● (1035)

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree that education is paramount in situations like this, as it is in all situations. The only problem I see is that in countries where these acts happen, they happen because there is a sense of impunity because the judicial system does not support victims and the military and police do not support victims.

In terms of getting that education to the people who need it, the wall of impunity that has to be broken down is problematic. As my colleague said, it is a multi-pronged issue. Yes, education is important and needs to get there, but the problem is getting through the wall of impunity and the wall of resistance that allows these acts to happen. Canada can be a strong and very potent leader in moving this issue forward.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague whether he would like to comment on the fact that while this report, as I am glad to see, does mention that while rape is a weapon of war, clearly from time immemorial, almost, until the present, and is mostly a crime in which women and girls are the victims, we are becoming more and more aware of men and boys being the victims of rape in war as well.

I am wondering whether he would comment on my view that while this remains a hugely gendered crime and while it is still violence committed by men and the mindset of men dominating women that lead to rape by men—whether it is of girls, women, men, or boys—nonetheless we are going to have to get our minds around the fact that while focusing on women and girls, we cannot lose sight of the fact that men and boys are sometimes large-scale victims as well.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Jeanne-Le Ber has 50 seconds to respond.

[English]

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Toronto—Danforth is absolutely right. The focus tends to be on male-versus-female violence. It is not that there is a rise in non-gender-specific sexual violence, but we are hearing more about it now because of technology and the way information gets out. I do not think the report intends to say it is only a men-versus-women situation, but, yes, this is hugely problematic right across the board. I would like to think that we could approach it from a vulnerability viewpoint, so that vulnerable people, be they from the LGBT community or young boys, girls, women, and men who are threatened, can find refuge in times of conflict.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1115)

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

(Division No. 335)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Barlow	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Block
Boughen	Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert

Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Eglinski
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Gourde
Hawn
Hoback
James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
Menegakis
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Norlock
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Payne
Poilievre
Raït
Reid
Richards
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shiple
Sorenson
Strahl
Toet
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Valcourt
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Dreeshen
Dykstra
Falk
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Gill
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Hayes
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leaf
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McLeod
Miller
Nicholson
Oliver
Opitz
Paradis
Perkins
Preston
Rajotte
Rempel
Rickford
Saxton
Seeback
Sopuck
Stanton
Sweet
Trost
Truppe
Van Kesteren
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)

NAYS

Members

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Brahmi
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Cleary
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Garneau
Genest
Godin
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hughes
Julian

Routine Proceedings

Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Pécllet	Pilon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
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Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sitsabaiesan	
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PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Order, please.

The hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans is rising on a point of order?

● (1120)

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could have clarification from you as to the validity of a vote by a member who leaves his seat during the vote and then returns to it in order to vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the member for Winnipeg Centre want to respond to the point?

Mr. Pat Martin: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I realize that I did inadvertently leave my seat briefly in the middle of debate. I can blame it on a sale that was held down at the Hudson's Bay. They had men's underwear on for half price. I bought a bunch that was clearly too small for me, and I find it difficult to sit for any length of time.

I apologize if it was necessary for me to leave my seat briefly, but I did not mean to forfeit my right to vote.

The Deputy Speaker: I had no briefing on this type of motion. Let me try to deal with it with at least some seriousness.

We all understand that members have to be in their seats at the time the motion or bill on which they are voting is read. The member for Winnipeg Centre was in his seat at that time. He did step away from his chair for a very short time and was directed by me to sit down again. I did not understand the explanation at the time, that he subsequently gave. I cannot say I really understand it at this point.

I am trying not to deal with this with the degree of levity it deserves, but I think I would have to say, at this point, that since he was both in his seat at the time the motion was read and at the time he voted, I would have to let his vote stand.

PETITIONS

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first petition was spearheaded by parishioners at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Vancouver and has over 500 signatures. The parishioners wish to bring to the attention of the House their concern about multinational seed companies that are gradually replacing the diversity of farmers' seeds with industrial varieties and obtaining an increasing number of patents on different seeds and threatening the ability of small family farmers to produce the food required to feed their families and communities. The petitioners ask that the government adopt international aid policies that support small family farmers, especially women, and ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed to ensure that farmers have access to the seeds they need.

● (1125)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am getting thousands of petitions from people across this country in support of my Motion No. 558, to urge the Canadian government to negotiate with the Chinese government 10-year multiple entry visas for Canadians to visit China. This is good for tourism, good for businesses, and good for family unification. It would also level the playing field with the United States, which in November negotiated 10-year multiple entry visas for American citizens visiting China. The petitioners urge the government to level the playing field and obtain this benefit for Canadian citizens as soon as possible.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today. The first is on behalf of petitioners who believe that impaired driving charges in Canada are not strict enough and who ask that Parliament change the Criminal Code to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition the petitioners call on Parliament to end the discrimination against girls that is occurring through gender selection pregnancy termination.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is about seeds. The petitioners want to ensure that small farmers in particular have a right to grow their own seeds.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House, as I have on many occasions, to present more petitions concerning the fact that every year hundreds of thousands of dogs and cats are brutally slaughtered for their fur in a number of Asian regions. These animals live in deplorable conditions. The petitioners call upon Canada to join the U.S., Australia, and the European Union in banning the import and sale of dog and cat fur. We are the only developed country without such a ban. I have about a hundred pages of petitioners' names and have now introduced thousands and thousands of these petitions. These are from metro Vancouver and Victoria, but I know that the concern is spread across the country, so I am very pleased to introduce more of these petitions today.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by numerous residents of Northumberland—Quinte West and the surrounding area, who want the government to ratify the convention on the protection of new varieties of plants, known as UPOV '91; to adopt international aid policies that support small farmers, especially women, and recognize their role in the fight against hunger and poverty; and to ensure that these policies and programs are developed in consultation with small farmers; and that they protect the rights of small family farmers in the global south to preserve, use, and freely exchange seeds.

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

The first petition has been signed by many Canadians who are calling for citizenship legislation that is fair to everyone. This petition expresses people's concerns regarding Bill C-24.

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition seeks a guarantee for small farmers to have the right to save, reuse, select, exchange, and sell seeds, which is presently a custom and tradition. This is particularly concerning to urban consumers who want to buy organic food and know the sources of their food.

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present, the first of which is on behalf of many residents who want the government to recognize the inherent rights of farmers to save, reuse, select, exchange, and sell seeds. The petitioners call upon Parliament to act upon this matter.

• (1130)

SEX SELECTION

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with sex-selective abortions. The petitioners ask that Parliament condemn discrimination against girls through sex-selective abortion.

IRAQ

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I present the third petition on behalf of many residents of my

Government Orders

constituency and surrounding area. The petitioners call upon the government to recognize the serious situation that Christians in northern Iraq are facing. They call upon the government to increase the number who can apply for refugee status within Canada.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand and present a petition of several hundred signatures to make sure that Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency do not approve a request for the genetically modified non-browning apple. This petition has been signed by many people in my riding under the leadership of the Big Carrot in Toronto—Danforth, which continues to lead the way in my riding for awareness of the problems of genetically modified products.

NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am receiving hundreds and hundreds of petitions dealing with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization. Many of these petitioners are from Thunder Bay—Superior North, and others from across northern Ontario.

NWMO is considering 15 communities for the storage of nuclear waste in northern Ontario, in close proximity to Lake Superior, which supplies drinking water to 60 million people. The petitioners ask that the NWMO reject proposals to construct nuclear waste facilities in northern Ontario and reject any proposals to transport nuclear waste through northern Ontario communities.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ANTI-TERRORISM ACT, 2015

BILL C-51—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

Government Orders

That, in relation to Bill C-51, An Act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, not more than two further sitting days shall be allotted to the consideration of the second reading stage of the Bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the second day allotted to the consideration of the second reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate of amendment.

If this motion is adopted, it will mean that there will be three days of debate on this bill, including today and Monday, and a vote with certainty on Monday evening.

• (1135)

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1 there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite all hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to start off by marking another milestone for the government. This marks the 88th time the government has moved time allocation or closure to limit debate in the House. It is particularly shocking this time because we had not even finished the fourth speech. We only got through three speeches in the House of Commons before the government gave notice that it intended to limit the debate.

For me, one of the most important functions of second reading debate is to let the public know what we are dealing with in the House, to shine a light on the contents of the bills we are dealing with and allow Canadians then to contact their MPs to let them know how they feel about the bills.

We on this side have had an enormous response from the public, just after yesterday. Therefore, we would like to ensure we have the time for people from all across the country to participate in this debate, people representing all different kinds of ridings and people bringing the input from their constituents into the debate. Instead, without even finishing the fourth speech, the government has moved to limit the debate. It says that three days will be enough.

I am asking the same question I have often asked at this point. Does this mean we will also see a very severe limit on the time in committee? Is the government going to refuse to hear expert witnesses? Is it going to refuse to provide enough time for Canadians who want to have input on the bill to come to the House of Commons and provide their input?

Could we get assurance from the government, even though it is limiting the debate, that it will allow a free, open and full debate in the committee on this very important bill?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, first, I would remind the member that the approach of our government has been to utilize time allocation as a device for scheduling debate, not as a device for limiting debate. If we were limiting debate, we would be concluding it today and having the vote on it.

That of is not our approach. In fact, the proof of that approach is the fact that the mother Parliament of Britain, which is held up as the model for us all to follow, debates all its bills in the normal course in the current Parliament for a much shorter period of time at each stage than we debate ours in this Parliament on average at every stage and in total. In fact, we spend on average about twice the time and at some stages much more than the members do in the mother Parliament. Therefore, we cannot in any way argue that there is a lack of adequate debate.

The hon. member is quite right, committee is a very valuable part of the process for consideration of a bill like this. It is an opportunity to hear from experts and an opportunity to look at the bill in detail, not simply to have tub-thumping speeches but rather that detailed examination. That is why committee is so important to the parliamentary process.

Far be it from me, however, to instruct the committee on the efforts it should put in. That is a question for the committee members themselves. They are masters of their own process.

As we all know, this is very important legislation for the people of Canada and their national security.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe the words I just heard from the government House leader. Committees at one time were masters of their own destiny, and they should do a detailed process. However, you know as well as I, Mr. Speaker, how parliamentary committees work now. The parliamentary secretary sits to the right of the chair and the Conservative backbench members sit along the line. However, back against the wall is a representative, as Mike Duffy called them, “The boys in short pants”. I expect there are boys and girls, but they sit against the wall and the parliamentary secretary takes their direction from those from the Prime Minister's Office. The members say “yea”, and that is what they follow. Also, they do not allow amendments. That is not how Parliament is supposed to work.

Would the House leader give us some assurance? The Conservatives are going to limit debate here, will he at least give us some assurance that the committee will actually hold robust hearings? The government could direct the committee. We know it does. There are dozens of people who want to come before the committee. They have concerns. Would he at least give us that assurance?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, my friend need only consult the actual debates in the mother Parliament in Britain and compare those with our debates here. He will see that what I have said is indeed true. Our debates at every stage of the bills we do in our Parliament, on average, extend much longer than the debates the members have in the mother House in Britain.

Our track record on having ample and significant debate here is demonstrated. The facts are very real. I invite him to inquire into that.

One thing I will not do is take up his invitation to extend beyond what I think is my proper role as House leader and give direction and dictates to a committee on how it conducts its business.

Government Orders

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak out against this measure. We unfortunately have a tendency to repeat our mistakes here in Canada. I did some research on the debates held in October 1970 on the War Measures Act. That legislation was also passed too quickly. Its repercussions were not properly studied and, as a result, 300 people were arrested.

There was also the unfortunate tradition whereby the RCMP did it all: it was responsible for intelligence and intervention, as well as being a police force. At the time, the RCMP had denounced Tommy Douglas as a dangerous Communist, and he was not allowed to travel to the U.S. That was also when David Lewis said it might be a good idea for the RCMP to learn to speak French, in order to combat the FLQ. However, that is the kind of debate we cannot have, because time is limited.

We will not be able to weigh the legal merits of our old laws and examine our errors together, errors made by this Parliament, in order to correct them. That is why time allocation is unacceptable. It does not allow the legislative branch to judge its own work, past work and mistakes.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, this bill includes security measures that are very important in the wake of recent events in Canada, but also in other countries such as France.

The provisions of the bill would criminalize the promotion and advocacy of terrorism; counter terrorist recruitment by giving courts the authority to remove terrorist propaganda online; enhance the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to address threats to the security of Canadians, while ensuring that the courts continue to provide oversight; and provide law enforcement agencies with enhanced ability to disrupt terrorist activities and offences. These things are very important, especially at this time. We need to pass this bill for the safety of all Canadians.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is the 88th time the government has imposed time allocation on a bill. It is really a sad record for the Conservative government. When the Conservatives announced Bill C-51, they promised that we would have enough time to debate and study at length this immense bill and its very serious repercussions for Canada.

Why did the government break its promise to give us enough time to properly study and debate this bill in the House?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat that when we adopt the approach to scheduling bills for debate, it is a scheduling approach that allows certainty for members and voting. It ensures we have more debate on bills than members have in Britain, a pretty good example of the extent of debate here. I could look to the French Assemblée Nationale and the contrast is even greater, certainly in terms of the powers that exist there.

However, we feel that this is an important priority, moving forward on legislation that will give the opportunity for us to: criminalize the promotion and advocacy of terrorism in order to protect Canadians from it; counter terrorist recruitment by giving

courts the authority to remove terrorist propaganda online; enhance the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service; address threats to the security of Canadians; provide law enforcement agencies with enhanced ability to disrupt terrorist offences and thereby be able to provide greater security and public safety; enhance the passenger protection program, which our air travellers rely upon, but also to use that program to prevent travellers who represent a terrorist threat from coming to our country; make it easier for law enforcement agencies to detain suspected terrorists before they can harm Canadians; and toughen penalties for violating court ordered conditions on terrorist suspects. I could go on, but these are all very important measures. .

We have seen first hand the threats that can arise to us, the threats that exist out there that have within the past year been amplified and repeatedly broadcast by those abroad, in ISIS and elsewhere, who seek to harm Canada and Canadians. They have given orders and injunctions to those who support their cause and believe in their cause. We know they do exist are out there. We have seen them actually act on that encouragement to do harm to Canadians. It has resulted in deaths right on our soil.

That is why this legislation is important. That is why we need to have these protections to keep Canadians secure. That is why the government is moving forward on this legislation.

• (1145)

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the importance of the legislation should speak to the need for us to be able to debate it and not to cut off debate.

I could not believe the disdain coming from the government House leader when he effectively said that one of his goals here was to cut off “tub-thumping” speeches. I have already spent dozens of hours reading and analyzing Bill C-51. I come from a background where I know a lot about security law. I will likely not get to speak to this bill. My constituents, and Canadians in general, will not have the benefit of the time I have spent on this and the knowledge I bring to the House in this area. That is a complete travesty and an affront to democracy.

Government Orders

A further affront that I see is that the government House leader is taking these questions, not the minister, who should be here to defend the bill. We all know, and we have already seen, that he does not even understand his own bill. It has been a travesty, listening to the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, whose bill this is, when it is as clear as day that they do not know their own bill. Personally, I doubt that the minister has even read the entirety of his bill.

The time has come to speak up for what the government is doing to our democracy. It is not just one more affront in one more bill, it is undermining our entire parliamentary democracy on one of the most important bills to come before the House in the three years since I have been here.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that if the hon. member has indeed worked as hard as he said on studying this and preparing arguments, that his own House leader has not seen fit to allow him the opportunity to speak to it. I am further disappointed that having just stood and said that he has studied the bill and has lots of questions about it, he failed to ask me a single question about the bill.

I am a former public safety minister. I have some knowledge of the issues involved. I would be quite happy to answer them, and I am here to do so.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo the comments of my colleague from Toronto—Danforth. What I find incredulous is that the government would invoke a limitation on the debate of this bill that it has said is a critical bill for the safety of Canadians.

This is the point in time where we debate the fairness of the process in this place to represent our constituents across the country, yet when we raise our concerns about the time allocated to debate the very bill, the government House leader uses the opportunity to start talking about the substance of the bill. If he believes so strongly that we should have the opportunity to debate the substance of the bill, why is he putting time limitation on the debate and limiting our opportunity to debate the bill?

I have to share that it is important for Canadians to understand the ambit and extent of these measures that the government has proposed in the bill, and why it is so important that we have the time to debate and discuss the ramifications of the bill in this place and at committee. Frankly, it is my personal opinion that this bill should go across the country so people in every small community understand what they are about to face.

I am saying this because of a situation that occurred in my province of Alberta, when there was a proposal before a utility board to build an electrical transmission line. I was working with farmers who were deeply concerned because they had already put up with a lot of impacts on their farm land, and there was going to be yet another major transmission line to export electricity. During our telephone calls, it was discovered that the utility board had spied on those calls. The end result of that revelation was that the whole agency was shut down.

We are not just talking about extreme terrorists. We are talking about intrusions on the right of ordinary Canadians in their community, protecting their property rights, which is supposed to

be a concern of the government, to have the right to come forward and state their objections.

I am very deeply troubled that the government is trying to reduce debate on this significant bill.

• (1150)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, the example raised has nothing to do with the content of the bill or the agency involved, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service is given powers to deal with threats to the security of Canada. Those are enumerated in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. However, it should also be understood by all of those who are in the House and those watching at home that they explicitly, according to the statute, do not include lawful advocacy, protest or dissent.

One knows that those protections are there. There are some on the other side who have problems with that wording, but we think it is wording that properly circumscribes and identifies the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service so lawful dissents and protests are protected.

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we saw again this past weekend another attack in Copenhagen. We have seen attacks recently in Paris and Australia, and of course we saw them in October of last year here in Canada.

The international jihadist movement has declared war on countries like Canada and our allies, countries that believe in freedom, democracy, openness, and tolerance. Canadians are concerned about this. They understand the concepts of the bill and they support it.

Could the minister tell us why it is so important to get the bill passed and how it is going to improve our national security and the safety of our citizens?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, as the member said, it is urgent because we are almost at a stage where rarely a week goes by without some kind of terrorist attack or incident inspired by the Islamic state somewhere in the world against those they have identified as targets, many of which are outside of what might be called the conflict area.

One of the notable things about these attacks is that they involve individuals who are already on the radar screen. These people were known to intelligence services. The bill seeks to enhance the ability of such intelligence agencies to get, with the assistance of the courts, a recognizance with conditions so that such individuals can be prevented from carrying out some of the actions they would like to carry out by identifying changes to the threshold necessary for recognizance of those people who are of concern. Even in the case of those attacks in Canada, we know we were dealing with individuals who were on the radar screen and were known to law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just to refresh my learned colleague's memory, this debate is about closure and time allotment. It is not about the bill. Unfortunately, this moment right now is about limiting, yet again, discussion of a bill.

Government Orders

We are voted into this place in order to represent the thoughts and feelings of our constituents, to hear from them and bring their concerns to this place. Unfortunately, each time that the government limits time, we are less able to bring their voices forward.

A colleague across the way said that Canadians understand this. They do not. People are calling my office and telling me they do not know what this is about and asking what it means for them.

Why is the government yet again shutting down the opportunity for Canadians to learn and understand how this legislation would affect their day-to-day lives?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I will remind my friend that this is not a debate on closure. The government has not moved closure. Closure is a different section in the Standing Orders. We are utilizing a scheduling device.

It is important that the bill pass in this Parliament because we are living in an era when threats continue to escalate and continue to change. The tools and devices that were available to protect us have been demonstrated to be wanting. We have demonstrated that there is a need for more. We have unfortunately learned the hard way, and other countries around the world have also learned the hard way.

We will probably never be able to make ourselves 100% safe and secure, but as a government it is most certainly our duty, as it is the duty of everyone here in this Parliament, to do what we can to make Canadians safe and secure in this country while protecting Canadians' rights and freedoms so that they can continue to enjoy the country that they have enjoyed so much.

• (1155)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, 22,000 people signed a petition to say “no” to the Conservatives. They do not agree with what is in Bill C-51. Today, an open letter signed by former prime ministers and Supreme Court justices made the point that civilian oversight of CSIS is virtually non-existent relative to the powers that will be given to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

I would like to ask the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons why he moved a time allocation motion for Bill C-51. Is it because the more people talk about it, the more they understand the bill and the less they agree with it?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, in preparing this legislation, our government did have to deal with the question of oversight. I hear some say that the answer is to have parliamentary oversight of the actions of CSIS.

We took a different approach. We believe that the expanded powers that are to be given should not be dealt with after the fact by politicians but should be dealt with before the fact by independent judges. We thought that was the most effective form of oversight for the expanded powers this legislation seeks to give to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. We think that is actually more effective than simply turning to politicians after the fact to duplicate the work of SIRC, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, for after-the-fact review.

It is an important role. SIRC is there to play that role, but we think that these expanded powers, because of their extraordinary nature and the circumstances we are in, also require independent oversight by judges before they are used. That is why these powers can only be exercised under warrants provided by judges.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was quite intrigued by that last answer. The government, over the course of its mandate, has brought in time and time again new laws that limit judicial discretion, that take powers away from judges, that tie the hands of judges when it comes to sentencing.

Why is it that these judges who cannot be trusted to impose a proper sentence are the only ones who should be responsible for oversight of our national security?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I reject both the premise and the conclusion of the hon. member's question.

We obviously believe that judges are best equipped to provide the oversight in advance of actions taken here through the requirement for warrants, but we also believe that is not the only oversight necessary. There is the oversight provided by the Security Intelligence Review Committee. They can look at matters after the fact. They can look at the overall pattern of issues and deal with the policy questions that result from them.

However, in terms of every individual action and the actual exercise of expanded powers such as those we are giving, there is a requirement for some ability to assess whether they are truly necessary and whether the threat justifies the exercise of the powers. We believe that having judges take evidence would be the best way of providing that kind of protection of Canadians' rights while at the same time allowing the security agencies to make their best efforts to keep Canadians safe.

It is the right balance and it is the best form of oversight for the kinds of powers we are talking about in this legislation.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I think this last exchange between the Liberals and the government illustrates why we need the time to have a full debate and expose what is actually in the bill.

The government keeps saying that the new powers of CSIS are subject to judicial oversight. No, they are not. It would be only if CSIS were to decide that what it was about to do would be illegal or unconstitutional that it would then be given the choice of applying for a warrant. All the other disruption activities would not require a warrant. The government is either being disingenuous or not fully reading its own bill.

Government Orders

It really illustrates why we need the time to consider in debate all the provisions of the bill. The bill makes some very major changes in our basic privacy rights and in basic, fundamental aspects of our freedom of speech. At the same time, I think we need to consider whether any of these things are actually necessary or whether the existing laws already provide a good basis for acting against terrorism.

The fact is that when we had both the Commissioner of the RCMP and the Director of Operations of CSIS before committees of this Parliament, they said that because of the budget cuts by the government, they do not have enough resources to actually make effective use of the powers they already have. This, to me, illustrates why we need a full debate in this House of Commons in which all members are free to participate, not the restricted scheduling the House leader is talking about.

● (1200)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, on the question of resources provided to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the gentleman need only go through the estimates provided by the government every year since we formed the government to see that the resources we have provided to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to do its very important work have increased considerably over that period of time. That is because we recognize the importance of the work CSIS does, as well as the work done by its companion agencies.

On the question of disruption, if what CSIS was doing was entirely legal and there was no question of people's rights being infringed, then obviously there would be no need for a warrant. However, in the case of any other activity that might violate someone's rights but would be carried out for a good law enforcement reason, a warrant would be needed. That is what we are proposing here.

The benefit of the disruption is that it allows the diversion of materials, revenue, or resources away from someone planning a terrorist attack. That allows our intelligence services, which are trying to keep us safe, to take away the public security threat while at the same time allowing the course of a plot to unfold.

This not only keeps Canadians safer but also ensures that we have a higher prospect of achieving a prosecution of those who seek to conduct terrorist threats against Canada. It has those two benefits: keeping us secure from the immediate threat and also moving forward with prosecutions. The very best way to deal with terrorist threats is to be able to prosecute those who wish to carry them out.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, the House leader seems to place a lot of faith in the judicial warrants, but that only works if all of the security agencies that are asking for those warrants actually do what they claim they would do with the warrants.

Justice Mosley issued a warrant in 2009 in conjunction with certain activities between CSEC and CSIS, but he found out by chance that they really had not lived up to what the warrant called for. I will read from his decision of December 20, 2013.

He stated:

CSIS breached its duty of candour to the Court by not disclosing information that was relevant to the exercise of jurisdiction by the Court....

He went on:

...the Court has determined that the execution of the type of warrants at issue in Canada has been accompanied by requests made by CSEC, on behalf of CSIS...to foreign agencies for the interception of telecommunications of Canadian persons abroad.

That is a quote from the decision. The court concluded that this is not authorized under any warrant issued to CSIS. Therefore, while the government claims that judges' oversight would be the safeguard, Justice Mosley makes it very clear in his decision that CSEC and CSIS have not always lived up to the purpose of the warrants.

I would also say that the pressure on judges to issue a warrant would be unbelievable, because if they do not issue it and a terrorist incident happens, they would feel responsible. That is not oversight, nor is it a proper protection of either Canadian civil liberties or our national security.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. government House leader will have only about 40 seconds for reply.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, that should be more than adequate for me to tell the House that the gap the member is concerned about was actually introduced in the previous piece of legislation that we dealt with in this House, a piece of legislation that the member himself and his party voted for, so I think his indignant outrage should be directed at himself.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[*English*]

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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1250)

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

(*Division No. 336*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Ambler
Anders

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Ambrose
Anderson

Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Boughen
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockett
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Eglinski
 Fantino
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Hawn
 Hoback
 James
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kent
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leef
 Lemieux
 Lizon
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McLeod
 Miller
 Nicholson
 Oliver
 Opitz
 Paradis
 Perkins
 Preston
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Sweet
 Trost
 Truppe
 Van Kesteren
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)

Barlow
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Dreeshen
 Dykstra
 Falk
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goldring
 Gosal
 Grewal
 Hayes
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 Menegakis
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Norlock
 O'Neill Gordon
 O'Toole
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shipley
 Sorenson
 Strahl
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NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Angus
 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bennett
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brosseau
 Casey
 Chicoine
 Christopherson
 Comartin
 Cotler
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)

Andrews
 Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Benskin
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boulterice
 Brahmi
 Caron
 Cash
 Choquette
 Cleary
 Côté
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Davies (Vancouver East)

Points of Order

Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hassainia
 Hyer
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Mathysen
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Murray
 Nash
 Nunez-Melo
 Patry
 Quach
 Rankin
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Sandhu
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 St-Denis
 Stoffer
 Toone
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Dion
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Eyking
 Garneau
 Genest
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Grogulé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hughes
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 May
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nicholls
 Papillon
 Péclet
 Rafferty
 Rathgeber
 Regan
 Saganash
 Scott
 Sgro
 Sullivan
 Tremblay

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

PROCEDURE DURING VOTES

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we had the vote earlier today on the adjournment motion, we had a request for a clarification from the member for Ottawa—Orléans about the behaviour of the member for Winnipeg Centre during the vote. We had a ruling by the Speaker, which I think is going to prove to be very problematic without clarification that one should be in one's seat when the motion is read, throughout the voting, and right up until the count is made. One could read the Speaker's ruling as being quite different, and I do not think there was an intent to make a new precedent at that time.

Could you please clarify for everyone assembled that there is no change to the procedure for voting and that we are expected to be here from the time of the reading of the motion until the announcement of the count of the vote?

● (1255)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the chief government whip is doing he knows he cannot do, and that is challenge a decision made by the Chair. He knows that is improper. He knows he should not be doing that. The ruling of the Chair stands, and so let us move on.

Government Orders

The Speaker: I will undertake to take a look at the situation that occurred and come back to the House if necessary.

I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings of the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

* * *

ANTI-TERRORISM ACT, 2015

The House resumed from February 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-51, An Act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and the Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks, I intend to move a motion.

It is with a genuine sense of disappointment that I rise to speak against Bill C-51, the anti-terrorism act, 2015. I am particularly disappointed to be doing it under time allocation, which will have the effect of not allowing many of my colleagues to actually speak to this important bill. It will also have the effect of making it difficult for Canadians to understand the full extent of what is in this bill.

This is a very important bill. I would remind all of us that all of Canada, and indeed much of the world, was shocked at the deaths of two Canadian soldiers here at home last October. Certainly those deaths, along with the attack on Parliament Hill, were sobering for all of us.

All of us here in the House, and I believe all Canadians, were proud to see their MPs back at work the next morning, standing together in our determination not to be cowed by violence. At that time, all of us made the commitment to work together to meet the terrorist threats Canada now faces in this new world we live in.

What happened to those lofty promises to work together? Just days later, when the new CSIS bill, Bill C-44, was introduced, suddenly the government, by itself, had all the answers. The government argued that the urgency of the threat meant that there was no time for debate at second reading, no time for a full study at the public safety committee, and no time for serious consideration of amendments put forward by the official opposition.

New Democrats supported Bill C-44 at second reading, still hoping the government was serious about co-operation between the government and the opposition on this important topic, still hoping that there would be adequate time for debate and consideration of amendments to improve the bill.

We ended up voting against that bill, a bill of questionable constitutionality in its attempt to have judges authorize illegal activities abroad and a bill without an ounce of improvement in CSIS oversight, despite granting new powers to CSIS. It was also a bill lacking any direct connection to the events of October. The government said to wait for the next bill.

Here we are, four months later, with a new bill in front of us. Unfortunately, this is another bill of questionable constitutionality,

this time attempting to get judges to authorize illegal and unconstitutional activities right here at home. As well, it is another bill without an ounce of improvement in oversight of our security agencies.

However, this bill goes even further. This is a bill that will wreak havoc on the privacy rights of all Canadians in the name of threats to national security. Further, it is a bill that contains definitions so broad and so far-reaching that it risks lumping together legitimate dissent with terrorism. It is at one and the same time broad, dangerously vague, and most likely ineffective in confronting the threats we face. This is a bill that still lacks any direct link to the actual events we faced in October or the ongoing threats we face today.

The government has rushed ahead with this bill and with changes to security on the Hill, again without consultation, and without even waiting for full reports on the October incidents. It is my understanding that when the Prime Minister was asked at his campaign-style event in Richmond Hill, where he unveiled this bill, instead of in the House of Commons, where it should have taken place, whether this bill would have prevented either of the October events, he had to say that he was not sure.

New Democrats have given this bill careful consideration before coming to our decision to oppose it in principle. We have consulted broadly with groups potentially most directly affected by this bill, with legal experts, and with our constituents when back in our ridings last week.

We have repeatedly asked the government to explain what some of the broad wording in this bill would cover and what specific new security actions will be authorized by this bill, all to no avail. The response more often than not has consisted of reciting general talking points about the severity of the threats we face, in a transparent attempt to use fear to marshal support for its bill, support that it obviously hopes will carry through to the ballot box.

We have not taken this decision to oppose Bill C-51 lightly. We have done our due diligence before pronouncing on a bill that would make major changes to over two dozen pieces of legislation and that would potentially have major impacts on privacy rights, rights to peaceful dissent, and fundamental freedoms, like freedom from detention without charge.

It will clearly have impacts on Muslim Canadians in particular because of the unfortunate tendency of the government to stray into Islamophobic rhetoric and bizarre claims by the Minister of Justice that terrorism is somehow culturally based.

It will clearly have an impact on those concerned with climate change and other environmental issues, especially when read in concert with the RCMP's 44-page memo on so-called anti-petroleum activists, a memo that, just as this bill does, tends to lump together both dissent and extremist and violent activities.

Government Orders

•(1300)

Neither the Muslim community nor environmental activists or first nations activists will be surprised to find themselves targets of the new measures in this bill. What I hope Canadians will come to understand is that it is not just the Conservative government's tendency to divide Canadians that makes some of us targets of this bill; it is the tendency of the government to overreach that makes all of us potential casualties of this bill.

Let us look at the changes the government is proposing that would have the biggest impact. Here I would start with part 1 of the bill, entitled "Security of Canada Information Sharing Act". I believe that this part of the bill would have the broadest potential impacts for all Canadians.

This bill would allow all federal departments and agencies to share information that may be relevant to national security with Canadian intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The NDP agrees that government departments and agencies should be able to share information about real threats to public safety, but it must be done with appropriate safeguards that do not catch innocent Canadians in the net.

The Privacy Commissioner has expressed concerns that this bill would allow the information of many law-abiding Canadians to be collected and shared with a long list of other government agencies and used for purposes other than those for which it was collected. This would clearly undermine a fundamental principle of our privacy rights when it comes to the government's use of our personal information. Many of the departments and agencies that would now be allowed to share information do not have adequate privacy protections in place, nor do they have any oversight mechanisms governing their information sharing activities.

A second aspect of this bill with very broad implications is the section granting new powers to CSIS. They are powers that would change the nature of CSIS as an organization, moving it from being an intelligence gathering agency to an active arm of the government in opposing threats to security and to the economy, infrastructure, and a wide list of activities, which potentially raises the question of whether the government would be able to use CSIS for political purposes.

This rolls back the clock more than 30 years and ignores the lessons of the McDonald Commission, which resulted in the creation of CSIS. It abandons the important lesson that combining intelligence gathering activities with disruption activities not only is mostly ineffective but almost inevitably leads to the kind of sordid activities the RCMP engaged in the 1970s in Quebec. These kinds of activities undermine public confidence in police and security agencies, and when we undermine public confidence in these agencies, we undermine the very co-operation with the public that is necessary for their success.

Bill C-51 would now give CSIS the ability to conduct threat disruption. These provisions would allow CSIS to take measures at home and abroad to disrupt threats when CSIS decides that it has "reasonable grounds to believe" that there is a threat to the security of Canada. Activities to disrupt threats that would contravene a right or freedom guaranteed under the charter would require CSIS to seek

authorization from a judge. However, here is the important point on this question. The government likes to say that this amounts to oversight of CSIS activities. The point I would raise is that CSIS would not require a warrant for any and all disruption activities, only those that CSIS itself judged might involve illegal or unconstitutional activities. Once a judge issued a warrant, the judge would have no further oversight role over what CSIS did with that warrant.

If we look carefully at the Mosley decision, we see that the judge said that not only was CSIS not fully forthright in the material it presented to the court to get a warrant but that once it had the warrant, it did not carry the warrant out in the manner it had prescribed to the judge. In other words, it did not do what it said it would do with the warrant.

For me, the important point is that it would still be left for CSIS to decide if the warrant application was necessary, and it would be left to CSIS to decide on its own and without oversight what activities that warrant authorized and how it would carry them out. As I mentioned, CSIS's record before the courts leaves much to be desired on this point.

When asked in question period, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has been unable or unwilling to provide examples of the kinds of activities that would be allowed under threat disruption. We have asked him repeatedly to give us a single example of what those kinds of thing are.

The presumption always is that disruption activities would always be illegal or unconstitutional, but we know quite well that this bill would authorize CSIS to do things like shut down someone's Internet service, maybe shut off someone's phone service, or conduct surveillance on private conversations carried out in public places.

•(1305)

There are all kinds of things here that will not require a warrant, and there are all kinds of things, as I said, that we would leave to CSIS to decide if a warrant were even required. Remember, the power to disrupt includes giving CSIS the right to enter any place, open or obtain access to anything, as well as obtain or copy any document, install or remove anything, and to do any other thing that is reasonably necessary to take those measures. I submit that this is a pretty broad mandate when it comes to these activities.

In other words, in taking measures to reduce a threat, Bill C-51 would give CSIS a free rein. It would only prohibit CSIS from killing or causing bodily harm, violating the sexual integrity of an individual, or obstructing justice.

I know that those provisions were put in to reassure us, but I do not find it very reassuring that those are the only limitations on CSIS' disruption activities. These are not very robust limits for an organization carrying out secret activities, and not very reassuring for an agency with such weak oversight and review.

Government Orders

The government always likes to say that there is active, robust oversight of CSIS, pointing to the activities of SIRC. However, it is not just a technical point to say that when the government eliminated the position of inspector general in CSIS, it actually eliminated the one independent officer who provided oversight in real time of the activities of CSIS. It was the mandate of the inspector general of CSIS to make sure that CSIS' activities conformed to the law. Those responsibilities have in theory been transferred to SIRC, which has no capacity and no access to the information it would need to provide that kind of active oversight, and to make sure that CSIS were always acting legally.

I will refrain from talking about whether those appointed to SIRC have always been the best appointees, because of the limited amount of time I have. However, I only need to mention Arthur Porter. Also, I would question whether part-time appointees and non-specialists can be expected to successfully carry out the kind of oversight we need for a body like this.

If we look at the last annual report of SIRC, SIRC itself said similar things to Justice Mosley. It said that CSIS did not always provide full and timely information when SIRC was trying to investigate CSIS activities. It said that in some cases, CSIS had not been fully forthright in providing information to its review body. Therefore, we do not have robust oversight and review; we have problematic oversight and review, and now we would expect that same body to take on oversight of this much broader mandate we would give CSIS.

A third aspect of the bill that has broad implications is the provision that criminalizes the promotion of terrorism and the related provision that authorizes the removal of online terror propaganda. Bill C-51 would make it a criminal offence to knowingly advocate and promote "...the commission of terrorist offences in general". This provision is designed to make the general promotion of terrorism an offence, in addition to the existing legislation that outlaws advocacy of specific terrorist acts. The new offence would be punishable by a prison term of up to five years.

Again, when the leader of the opposition asked the government to give us an example of what would now be illegal but is not already illegal under existing legislation, a question that I think he asked five times, he did not get an answer from the government. However, such a provision would certainly place a chill on free speech by its very enactment. It would also lower the threshold for what is considered promotion of terrorism.

The existing hate propaganda section of the Criminal Code criminalizes communication that advocates violence, where such incitement is likely to lead to breach of the peace. Why is that not adequate? Certainly we have seen RCMP able to lay terrorism charges frequently, and very recently here in Ottawa. Again, we ask, why is this new much broader provision needed?

Under the new provision, a person may be convicted if their statements are simply "being reckless" as to whether or not any of these offences may be committed. Again, this new offence would expand the existing Criminal Code offence, which makes promoting a specific terrorist act a crime, without explaining how this would help reduce threats to our security.

●(1310)

There is always a danger when we have limited resources—and certainly, the current government has severely limited the resources available to both the RCMP and CSIS—and when we spread the net too wide that we will miss the real terrorists, that we will miss the real threats to society, because we will not have enough resources to actually take on the hard work necessary to identify them. As one person said, "Searching for terrorists is like looking for a needle in a haystack and the last thing we need people doing is adding extra hay". To me, when we spread this broad net, we start adding extra hay that makes it much more difficult to identify the real and urgent threats to our security.

Under the new law, a judge would be able to order Internet service providers, website administrators, and so on to remove any material when he or she has grounds to believe that the material might be terrorist propaganda. The judge could also order the custodian of a computer network to provide the court with information about who posted it. Moreover, the court would be able to order the seizure of physical materials. In both cases the authors or owners of the materials could appeal the decision before the material is destroyed.

This brings back shades of the old government bill that sparked the creation of the "tell Vic everything" campaign, by its expansion of government access to information about the online activity of perhaps any of us.

The inclusion of amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act also raise the question about how the government is proposing to spend the limited resources police and security agencies have. Again, in Richmond Hill, I understand that the Prime Minister was asked whether the bill would apply to teenagers in their parents' basement. He said yes. My question is, do we really want to waste time chasing kids in basements at the possible cost of letting the real terrorists slip through an overfull net?

A fourth element of the bill that should raise general concerns is the changes to preventative arrests and peace bonds, which threaten one of our most fundamental rights, the right to freedom from detention without charge.

I have heard many people comment that this is something that has been in place for something like 800 years in our legal system. Again, there is a serious question of what value this new provision has, especially when weighed against its negative aspects.

We should remember that legislation allowing for preventative arrests was first adopted under the Liberals after the events of September 11, 2001. This allowed police to detain someone for up to three days without laying charges. However, between 2001 and 2007, that clause was never used, before sun-setting in that latter year. Nonetheless, it was reinstated by the Conservatives in 2013.

Government Orders

Now, Bill C-51 proposes to lower the threshold required for a judge to authorize preventative detention from reasonable grounds that a terrorist activity “will” be carried out to “may” be carried out. The RCMP would now need to establish only that a terrorist activity might happen, instead of the previous grounds that there was some certainty that the person would commit a terrorist act. One lawyer described to me that what we had in the previous preventative detention was the lowest possible evidentiary standard, and now we are lowering that.

While keeping in mind that law enforcement agencies never found the preventative arrest provisions useful, we also need to remember the historical record of Canada on detention in times of crisis. Japanese Canadians were interned on the west coast despite the lack of any evidence at the time, or thereafter, of a single Japanese Canadian aiding the enemy in World War II. Ukrainian Canadians were similarly interned. At the time of the FLQ crisis in Quebec, hundreds of Quebecers were arrested and detained without charge, and no one so detained was ever charged with, let alone convicted of, a criminal offence.

Certainly fears of political injustices resulting from the interaction of this bill with the apparent ongoing practices of racial profiling in Canada will need to be addressed.

Therefore, I am voting against the bill and hope that we can have a full airing of the issues. However, we have not had a very good indication of that today with the introduction of time allocation. I remain disappointed that the Liberals have given the government a blank cheque on Bill C-51, offering their support for the bill even if it is unamended.

Do I have confidence that the government will listen to evidence, experts, or the communities affected by this bill? Frankly, I do not. Therefore, I move:

• (1315)

That, the motion be amended by deleting all the words after “That” and substituting the following:

this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-51, An act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and the Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, because it: (a) threatens our way of life by asking Canadians to choose between their security and their freedoms; (b) was not developed in consultation with other parties, all of whom recognize the real threat of terrorism and support effective, concrete measures to keep Canadians safe; (c) irresponsibly provide CSIS with a sweeping new mandate without equally increasing oversight; (d) contains definitions that are broad, vague and threaten to lump together legitimate dissent with terrorism; and (e) does not include the type of concrete, effective measures that have been proven to work, such as working with communities on measures to counter radicalization of youth.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that party opposite voted to keep travel for a terrorist purpose legal. Those members voted to allow convicted terrorists to keep their citizenship. They voted to stop our security agencies from co-operating with our allies, and now they have expressed concerns about this important and timely legislation.

Could the member tell me what, if any, national security legislation he and his party would support?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, as I tried to make clear in my speech, we already have adequate provisions to combat

terrorism, and the government has failed to show us where those gaps are and how the measures it is proposing would address those gaps.

At the risk of the other side accusing me of naivety on terrorism, I have a considerable amount of experience working internationally. I was present in East Timor at the referendum for independence, when the Indonesian military-sponsored militias killed more than 1,500 people and destroyed virtually the entire infrastructure of a nation. I worked on a peace-building project in Ambon, Indonesia, when the market was bombed, the very market that my partner had just set out for, but luckily to which he was a few minutes late. I worked in Afghanistan for four months in 2002 when hundreds were killed or maimed by roadside bombs laid by the Taliban. In 2010, I was an election observer in Muslim Mindanao where there were three casualties at the polling station where I worked.

What I learned from these experiences is that preventing the use of violence and terrorism is a difficult and complex task. There is never a silver bullet, nor are any two situations exactly alike. What was most effective most often was old-fashioned front-line police investigation, which is human resource intensive, demanding high skills and dedication from the police and security forces involved.

• (1320)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the member outlined a number of concerns in his remarks that do need to be addressed, but I really am surprised by the amendment to the motion. I do believe that the threat level is heightened, and at a time of threats to our country, we should be coming together in this place and bringing in a bit of sanity. The government should allow democracy to work and allow amendments. I am surprised that the NDP would put an amendment forward that basically attempts to throw the bill out and that would, therefore, put our national security at risk.

The NDP also calls fairly strongly for proper oversight. In 2004, the current Minister of Justice and the Minister of State for Finance were on an all-party committee that called for that oversight. In 2009, there was another committee, which the member for Yorkton—Melville chaired, and which the member for Northumberland—Quinte West was on, as was the member for Oxford. There were actually six Conservative MPs on that committee, which also called for oversight similar to what we called for in 2004. It was with respect to Bill C-81.

Does the member have any idea why the Conservative members now seem to take for granted what the Prime Minister says, that SIRC is enough? Why do they not want to fight for proper oversight of all of our national security agencies? That is what Canadians are demanding.

Government Orders

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I first want to say that I have the utmost respect for the hon. member for Malpeque as a colleague here in the House. However, the Liberals keep trying this diversionary tactic of talking about oversight when they have already promised to support the bill even if oversight is not added to the bill. Therefore, I want to go back to the first part of his remarks with respect to why I would move such a motion.

I would like to know why the Liberals would support such a bill without reservation and why they have given a blank cheque to the government. This is a bill that would be ineffective in addressing the threats we face on a daily basis yet puts our personal privacy rights and many of our freedoms at risk. It also creates a whole new category of activities for CSIS, which the Liberals will now be voting for despite the fact that there would be no oversight for these kinds of disruptive activities.

Therefore, I throw it back to the member. I do not understand why we do not hold the government to its word and ask it to work together with the opposition parties to come up with measures that would be effective against terrorism and do what needs to be done, not this broad, sweeping bill, which to me seems to be designed for political purposes. The government actually tipped its hand by announcing it at a campaign-style rally in Richmond Hill instead of here in the House where it belonged.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for his excellent speech. I thank him not just for his excellent speech, but also because we have the opportunity to work together on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

I am very proud to second his motion today and to see the incredible work we do as the official opposition when it comes to a bill like Bill C-51.

In his speech, he mentioned that we are very aware that terrorism is a real threat to everyone. We agree that public safety is, or should be, one of the top priorities of any government in the world. However, Bill C-51 does not directly tackle the problem. My colleague pointed out that the bill is too broad, does not necessarily address the real problems, does not provide the right tools and does not really deal with what we should be targeting.

As we mentioned during the questions and comments in the debate on the time allocation motion, we have realized that the more people learn about the content of Bill C-51 and the more they understand the consequences of this bill, the less they agree with the government's position.

What does my colleague think about the fact that the Conservatives have decided to shut down such an important debate and refuse to let MPs talk about this extremely important issue? Why are they muzzling us when they do not have as much support as they thought? People are realizing that Bill C-51 is not such a good bill.

• (1325)

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Alfred-Pellan for her remarks and her support for my motion.

We on this side of the House took some time to study the bill and to consult with our constituents and talk to experts in the field. Many of us learned a lot about the bill that we would like to share in this House. One of the important functions of the House of Commons is that when we have debate on measures like this, which are so important both to national security and to civil liberties, it allows the public to understand the bill and what is going on here. Therefore, as I said at the beginning of my speech, I am disappointed to see time allocation, which will prevent many of my colleagues from participating in this debate.

I also wonder whether another purpose of time allocation is to ensure that the Conservative members on the other side do not have to stand up and speak to this and do not have to answer questions about the bill. That is the other side of what happens when we have this near closure of debate, with only really two more days in this House, on such an important law.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have served on the committee the hon. member referred to for some nine years now, and I can say that we have had a lot of debates on a lot of issues.

I have looked at this. The member said that they have had time to consult on it. The New Democrats were saying no to it almost from the minute the bill entered this House, so it is somewhat inaccurate to say something otherwise.

I will provide a scenario for my constituents. Let us say there are two people with Canadian citizenship in a foreign country where there is some unrest and we know terrorism exists. They want to leave the country, so they go to the airport and see a CBSA official and state that, according to international law, as citizens they have the right to re-enter their country. That official must immediately agree, which is a good thing. However, the official then sees something that causes him or her to believe there is a possibility that these two individuals may have been engaged in a terrorist activity in that country and may be coming back to Canada.

Under the current legislation the CBSA official cannot go next door to where there is an RCMP officer to voice his or her concern so that something can be done about it, because the current legislation does not allow for that. All this bill would do is allow, under the Privacy Act, that official to talk to that RCMP officer to ensure that something is done about it to remove that fear. That is one of the simple things this legislation would do, and I do not know why the opposition is so fundamentally and ideologically against this bill.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West for his comments. I have worked with him on the public safety committee, and I know him to be a member of great integrity. I value his experience and his views.

However, he is incorrect to say that we were opposed to the bill all along. We said we had concerns about the bill and we were exploring them. We did so and reached a very considered decision about our support for the bill.

Government Orders

I have to say something about the scenarios that government members keep bringing up, these imaginary examples. It reminds me of what my grandmother used to say, “If wishes were horses, we’d all take a ride”. It is very difficult to deal with these theoretical examples, which is too strong a word. It is not an example, but a very cloudy view of the existing legislation.

I would submit that, with most of these scenarios, we actually do have the power to address them. The RCMP and CSIS have been doing a very good job of addressing those threats under the existing legislation.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech today, I will inform you that I will be splitting my time with my friend and colleague, the hard-working, esteemed member representing the great riding of Medicine Hat.

Today I rise to speak to the anti-terrorism act, 2015, which I am proud to say was announced in my home town, the great town of Richmond Hill. I will be speaking specifically to those provisions regarding the passenger protect program and how we are working to guard our aviation industry from terrorist attacks.

From its beginnings in the 1900s, flight has always been connected to risk. In the early days, poor navigational devices meant that pilots had to fly close enough to the earth to navigate, using roads and railways during the day and relying on bonfires lit in fields on poorly lit days when visibility was bad or, indeed, at night. It is not surprising that fatal accidents were common.

Today, thanks to advances in navigation, aerodynamics, aircraft design, and digital technology, our aviation system is one of the safest ways to travel, and it is a method of travel that Canadians have embraced, particularly given our vast geographic size. However, we face a rapidly changing threat landscape that can and has had an impact on aviation security.

As we know, terrorists have made a point of targeting airplanes because these attacks offer a large number of potential victims, have a high economic impact, and lead to widespread publicity to feed their propaganda machines. From hijackings to bombings, we have seen terrorist groups target the aviation system throughout the past many decades. The incidents and dates are clearly imprinted on our minds. I remind the House of the bombing of Air India flight 182 in 1985, the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in 1988, the attacks that destroyed four planes and killed thousands of people on September 11, 2001; and of course, there were the failed attempts, such as the shoe bomber on a flight headed to Miami in December 2001, the underwear bomber on a flight headed to Detroit in December 2009, and the printer cartridges rigged with explosives originating in Yemen in 2010.

Each of these attacks and near misses has meant another shift in airline security. Many of these are physical security measures: restrictions on the amount of liquids brought onboard, the scanning of all baggage, removing shoes to go through security, requirements to undergo physical searches or body scans as requested by airport security agents. Other measures include the scanning of passports and other travel documents to confirm citizenship and identification and the provision of basic information to transportation security

agencies when booking flights that travel through United States airspace

Like many of its allies, Canada has a program in place to protect air travellers by, for instance, denying boarding to specified individuals who pose a threat to aviation security. That is the passenger protect program, to which I will return in a moment.

These measures were put in place with one clear purpose: to keep our aviation system safe. That means guarding against immediate threats to airplanes and protecting the lives of airline crew and passengers, not to mention citizens who may find themselves in the pathway of a compromised airplane, such as we saw on that fateful day, 9/11. Today, however, terrorist incidents around the world are forcing us to once again re-evaluate our aviation security and look beyond the immediate threat to an airplane.

It is clear that the international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada. Canadians are being targeted by jihadi terrorists simply because these terrorists hate our society and the values it represents. That is why our government has put forth these measures that protect Canadians against jihadi terrorists who seek to destroy the very principles that make Canada the best country in the world in which to live.

One of the gravest threats to global security is the phenomenon of terrorist travel: individuals who travel by air to regions of unrest and violence to engage in terrorist activities. These individuals do not pose an immediate threat to an airplane. Indeed, they want their flight to be safe and uneventful so that they can reach their destinations.

● (1330)

While these violent extremists are not an immediate threat to an airplane or to passengers when they travel, they do pose a significant danger to those people living in the countries where they undergo their training and terrorist activities and in the countries in which they want to perpetrate their crimes. Moreover, there is a great risk that they will return to their home country to test out their newly acquired skills by plotting and carrying out attacks on innocent civilians.

In order to meet this shifting threat, Canada's passenger protect program itself must evolve. The legislation before us includes measures that would expand and strengthen this program, allowing us to address the threat of terrorist travel.

First and foremost, we would expand the program's mandate so it would focus on two key areas: stopping threats to aviation security and preventing individuals from travelling by air for certain terrorist purposes. These include training, recruiting or conducting terrorist attacks in another location. The full scope of these activities would be aligned with the new Criminal Code offences on terrorist travel that were brought in under the Combating Terrorism Act.

Government Orders

We also propose to strengthen the program's legislative framework. This means clearly defining the authorities of both the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Minister of Transport.

We will make it clear in law that the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has the authority to identify and list individuals who pose a threat to aviation security as well as those suspected to be travelling for terrorist purposes; determine the appropriate measures in each case, an authority currently held by the Minister of Transport; provide administrative recourse to individuals who are denied boarding under the program; and share the specified persons list, in whole or in part, as needed with foreign states in support of the program's mandate.

The Minister of Transport will have the authority to communicate with air carriers, including sharing information about individuals listed under the program to air carriers flying to, within and from Canada; monitor industry compliance with the program; and regulate civil aviation in general, including overall security of the aviation system.

To support its expanded mandate, the passenger protect program will also include an expanded range of response measures that can be used other than denial of boarding. These could include additional physical screening of specified individuals and coordination with the RCMP in-flight security officers. All actions would be undertaken proportionate to the perceived risk posed by the individual.

We will also put in place a streamlined appeal process. In effect, we will establish clearly defined procedures for appeal of decisions and actions related to the passenger protect program. This means that one Federal Court judge could protect and rely upon classified information in making his or her decision. This is similar to procedures already in place for judicial review of ministerial decisions about listing terrorist entities and denying charitable status to organizations that support terrorists.

As members can see, an enhanced passenger protect program would allow Canada to better address terrorist travel by air. We firmly believe that not only do we have an obligation to our citizens but also to our global allies to do everything we can to prevent individuals from leaving and returning to Canada for terrorist purposes. This is what this legislation is intended to do: to stop terrorists before they can perpetrate terror on innocent civilians in Canada and abroad.

The changes I have itemized would provide firm backing for our approach, and we must act now to put these changes in place. I hope the New Democrats will put aside their opposition to criminalizing this kind of terrorist activity, including terrorist travel, and that the Liberals will put aside their opposition to revoking citizenship from terrorists. I hope all members can come together to support this important legislation. At the end of the day, we all want a safer Canada and we all want to keep Canadians safe.

● (1335)

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-51 is broad in scope—too broad. If the Conservatives want to deal with radicalization and the serious and complex problem of

terrorism in the world, then they need carefully targeted tools, rather than broad measures like the ones they are introducing.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary a question. I doubt he will be able to answer me since, unfortunately, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety could not, but I will try anyway.

Bill C-51 indicates that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service will be able to disrupt or intercept any threat to the Canadian economy or infrastructure, among other things. I would like the parliamentary secretary to tell us exactly what is being targeted.

Can he explain to us what exactly constitutes a threat to Canada's security when it comes to its infrastructure and economy? I am asking for just one example.

● (1340)

[English]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, it is perplexing to hear NDP members so ideologically stuck in this partisan view all the time when we bring forward legislation that is meaningful legislation for Canadians. I know the member is a member for Parliament from Quebec. Quebecers overwhelmingly support this legislation.

The international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada. Canadians are being targeted by jihadist terrorists simply because these terrorists hate our society. I need not remind the member of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent who was run over simply because he was wearing the uniform in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu.

With respect to the specific question on threat disruption, an example of threat disruption could be as simple as speaking to the family of a radicalized individual to dissuade him or her from a dangerous path or by impersonating and discrediting a terror traveller facilitator online.

A number of things can be done that we as Canadians have a responsibility to bring to the attention of authorities, including CSIS. Let us break down these silos, these barriers between departments so we can stop these threats from threatening Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this legislation demonstrates very clearly, whether New Democratic or Conservative members of Parliament, that they are not listening to what Canadians actually want. They want a higher sense of demonstration that the House of Commons is dealing with the very important issue of safety and security of our nation.

If we listen to the NDP, the NDP does not want to build upon the powers of preventive arrest, and that is why they are voting no. It does not want to build on making better use of our no-fly list, it does not want to allow for more coordinated information sharing by government departments and agencies. Canadians want to see this.

On the other hand, we have the Conservatives. The Conservatives are not recognizing the importance of oversight. Canadians want oversight of the system. The Five Eyes, including England, Australia and others, has recognized the importance of oversight.

Government Orders

Why do the Conservatives not listen to what Canadians want? They want to have adequate oversight, and that means parliamentary oversight. Why will they not accept that as an amendment going into committee stage?

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, on one hand, we have the Liberal Party saying that it supports the legislation. On the other hand, its members get up and complain about us bringing in the legislation.

The member mentioned oversight. He talked about the NDP. However, he said nothing about the 15 minutes the NDP members chewed up by slow voting. That took time away from people to have the opportunity to stand in the House to speak about the bill. The irony of that is comical to say at best.

However, the Security Intelligence Review Committee is a robust Canadian model that has provided expert oversight of CSIS for decades. Threat disruption powers will be reported on and tabled in Parliament and SIRC will continue to have unfettered access to all information of CSIS. CSIS remains subject to judicial authority and under no circumstances can CSIS pervert the course of justice, inflict bodily harm, or violate a person's sexual integrity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before we resume debate, I would just like to remind all hon. members of two points.

The first is that when members have finished their speeches and are taking questions, when the question is being asked, members are to take their seats. I have noticed several members recently who have fallen into the habit of remaining on their feet, waiting for the questions to be asked, when they ought to take their seat.

On a related point, when members would like to ask a question or make a comment, standing before the previous answer is completed is also inappropriate. Quite frankly, it results in the opposite of what members want, which is that the Chair will not recognize somebody who has been standing through the previous answer in order to not reward conduct in which members were not supposed to be engaging in the first place.

With that, thus endeth the lesson.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Medicine Hat.

• (1345)

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank my outstanding hon. colleague for Richmond Hill for sharing his time with me and also for his hard work on this file. It is an important file, and I am pleased to be on the public safety committee. It is also my pleasure to rise today in the House to debate Bill C-51, the anti-terrorism act, 2015.

We find that the world we live in today is a dark and dangerous place. This was most brutally demonstrated by last October's attacks in Ottawa and in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. We are not immune to the threat of terrorism, nor are our allies. We have tragically seen this in Paris, Sydney, and Copenhagen, beacons of western civilization struck by jihadist terrorists. Let us make no mistake: the international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada and her allies.

The legislation before us today would provide Canadian law enforcement and national security agencies with additional tools and

the flexibility to keep pace with evolving threats and better protect Canadians here at home.

However, that is not all we are doing. It is important to fight terrorism at home, but we are also fighting it abroad. Our brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces are engaged in a battle with the barbaric so-called Islamic State.

In line with the measures taken by our allies, the government is taking additional action to ensure that our law enforcement and national security agencies can counter those who advocate terrorism, prevent terrorism from travelling, prevent the efforts of those who seek to use Canada as a recruiting ground, and disrupt planned attacks on Canadian soil.

The proposed legislation includes checks and balances to ensure it respects the rights of Canadians and complements other legislation passed by our Conservative government in order to better protect Canadians and secure institutions. These measures include the Combating Terrorism Act and the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act. However, I would be remiss if I did not note that the Liberals and the NDP have consistently voted against these types of measures for increasing our national security.

We have heard from both the Liberals and the NDP that they believe more money ought to be invested in CSIS and the RCMP. I find it interesting that when our Conservative government brought forward more funding for these agencies for parliamentary approval, on seven separate occasions the Liberals and NDP voted against this funding.

I would like to look at the facts. The fact is that our Conservative government has increased funding to both CSIS and the RCMP by over one-third since forming government. We will hold that record up any day of the week.

Much has been made by the NDP of portions of the anti-terrorism act that relate to disrupting terrorist threats. I would like to give some concrete examples of how these powers would help keep Canadians safe.

One example would be if a 21-year-old Canadian citizen had become disenchanted with his home life due to videos of sermons given by radical imams. He has additionally sought to acquire copies of *Inspire*, the English-language magazine published by al Qaeda in the Arabian peninsula. Individuals with this local mosque have advised CSIS that he is planning to travel overseas to engage in terrorist activity.

Currently, CSIS can investigate but cannot do anything to stop the individual from travelling. The furthest CSIS could go is to advise the RCMP that it believes he is about to commit an offence, and the RCMP could launch its own investigation. However, under Bill C-51, CSIS would be able to engage with a trusted friend or relative who could speak to this individual and advise against travelling for terrorist purposes. Further, CSIS would be able to meet with the individual to advise him that they know what he is planning to do and what the consequences of taking further action would be.

Government Orders

Another example would be if CSIS learned that a planned shipment of chemicals might be used in a terrorist attack on a Canadian business operating in a foreign country, but the exact timing was not known. Currently CSIS can share that information with the foreign government and other foreign partners. A travel alert could potentially be issued by Foreign Affairs. Under Bill C-51, CSIS could engage in a joint operation with a foreign partner to disrupt the shipment. For example, the shipment could be rerouted so that it would not be delivered into the hands of terrorists.

Lastly, let us say a Canadian ally warns CSIS that foreign spies are planning to meet with a Canadian avionics firm. CSIS investigates and determines that the spies are posing as businessmen in order to purchase telemetry equipment. This dual-use technology has a civilian application in test programs, but it is also used in ballistic missile targeting.

• (1350)

Currently CSIS, as part of its investigation, can interview officials from the Canadian company to gather information. CSIS can ask the CBSA to check the parts' paperwork at the time of export to determine if there are customs violations.

Under Bill C-51, CSIS could seek and receive a warrant to intercept equipment and alter it so that it would not have any suitability for non-civilian applications.

With this new mandate, CSIS could take measures at home and abroad to disrupt threats when it had reasonable grounds to believe there was a threat to the security of Canada. These threats to the security of Canada are defined in the CSIS Act and include espionage, sabotage, foreign-influenced activities, terrorism, and domestic subversion, which refers to activities directed against the constitutionally established system of government in Canada.

CSIS would only be able to take reasonable and proportional measures to disrupt threats. To do this, CSIS would consider the nature of the threat, the nature of the proposed measures, and the reasonable availability of other means to disrupt the threat. The intelligence services of most of Canada's democratic allies have had similar mandates and powers for many years.

It is important not to misconstrue definitions under the security of Canada information sharing act and the CSIS Act. The threat disruption mandate covers threats as defined in the CSIS Act, namely espionage, sabotage, foreign-influenced activities, terrorism, and domestic subversion.

CSIS is strictly prohibited from undertaking threat disruption activities against individuals engaged in lawful protest or dissent.

I know my time is probably running short and I would like to end my remarks today with a question. Opposition members like to say that this bill will somehow take away rights from Canadians. I would like someone on the other side of the House to explain to me where this legislation authorizes that. As far as I can tell, the only people this legislation will impact are those engaged in terrorist activities, those planning to become engaged in terrorist activities, and those who are advocating terrorist activities. If those are the types of individuals the NDP and Liberals are choosing to defend, I suspect Canadians will have a strong message for them in the next election.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we have seen in the press, former CSIS officer François Lavigne is alarmed by the Conservative government's new bill and believes that the measures proposed are unnecessary and a threat to the rights of Canadians.

We know that CSIS was created in 1984. Prior to that, the RCMP was engaged in illegal activities, and the result was the McDonald Commission, which then created CSIS.

Does the member agree that with the new bill, CSIS will be allowed to do legally what the RCMP was doing illegally prior to the McDonald Commission?

Mr. LaVar Payne: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that the member refers to an individual. I have an individual I like to refer to, the mayor of Montreal and former Liberal cabinet minister Denis Coderre, who said that he expects Parliament to rapidly pass the anti-terrorism act, 2015.

I am wondering if the member opposite and his party will obstruct this important legislation from moving through the House quickly.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on several occasions I have heard this particular member, as well as other members of the government, talk about how unelected, appointed people have too much power around here.

Would the member agree that the ultimate oversight in the particular instance of this legislation should belong to the people who are elected to this House of Commons?

• (1355)

Mr. LaVar Payne: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where the member would have heard me say that it is unelected people who have the power. I am totally lost by this question.

I do not recall ever saying that. The member has not given any specific information in terms of which of my colleagues or where he heard that comment. It sounds like a lot of fabrication to me.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague and I appreciate his comments.

The NDP has asked for more time to debate the issue of Bill C-51, a very important piece of legislation to make sure Canadians are safe, yet the NDP moves concurrence motions and uses delay tactics such as slow voting. I think a number of people were probably not able to take part in this debate because of the delays by the NDP.

Would the member agree that there are unreasonable and illogical delays from the NDP?

Mr. LaVar Payne: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Langley has eloquently described New Democrats' slow voting and their obstruction to all kinds of legislation. I well understand that.

I also listened to their leader talking about principled stands on this issue. In that vein, I know New Democrats voted for keeping travelling for terrorist purposes legal. They voted to allow convicted terrorists to keep their citizenship. They voted to stop security agencies from co-operating with our allies. It appears to me that at every step of the way, New Democrats are trying to stop legislation, and it appears that they want to hug terrorists. I do not know for sure, but maybe they could tell us.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I hardly know where to begin. The hon. member for Medicine Hat has been attacking opposition members by saying that we somehow would rather side with terrorists than protect Canadians from an act that is so vague and so sweeping.

If he wants an example, British Columbians will be lining up to commit acts of civil disobedience to stop pipelines if they are pushed down our throats. The candidate for the Green Party in Burnaby North—Seymour, Dr. Lynne Quarmby, was arrested for standing up for her community, the municipality that had already tried to pass a bylaw to stop Kinder Morgan from pushing its pipeline through under this act.

I have asked the Prime Minister, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and the Minister of Justice to explicitly state that the act would not apply to acts that were non-violent but broke a law out of conscience, as Conservative members chose to break the law when they never registered their long guns under the long gun registry.

You applaud civil disobedience when it is a law you do not like. Will you recognize that this law will criminalize people and unleash your secret police on protesters in this country?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before I go to the member for Medicine Hat, I would remind all hon. members to direct their comments to the Chair. I presume that reference was not directed at the Chair, even though it ought to have been.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Mr. Speaker, that is too funny, actually. Did she say “secret police force”? I wonder if the hon. member has actually read that CSIS is strictly prohibited from undertaking threat disruption activities against individuals engaged in lawful protest or dissent.

She obviously has not read the legislation and she would like to twist it so that it fits her narrative, so what can I say?

Members opposite need to read the legislation and understand what it really means, which is that we will protect Canadians in their right to lawfully protest and demonstrate.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night I helped ring in the lunar new year, the Year of the Sheep, at Fo Guang Shan Temple, located in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville. The objectives of Fo Guang Shan Temple are to promote

Statements by Members

the principles of humanistic Buddhism and to foster peace and harmony among all peoples of the world.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the founder of Fo Guang Shan, has guided this effort by providing educational opportunities, sponsoring cultural events, engaging in community service, and extensively writing and teaching about the Buddhist path of wisdom and compassion.

This beautiful temple located on Millcreek Drive is a wonderful asset to our community, and the work of Buddha's Light International Association members is both locally and world renowned. The Year of the Sheep symbolizes peace and generosity and reminds us to be well grounded and kind to others. May I wish everyone a very Happy New Year.

Gong hey fat choy. Gong xi fa cai. Chuc mung nam moi. Saehee bok mani badeuseyo.

* * *

● (1400)

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand on behalf of New Democrats to commemorate the lunar new year. This year, lunar new year falls on February 19, today, and all across our country Canadians will be welcoming the Year of the Goat.

People born in goat years are calm, friendly, and possess a strong sense of kind heartedness and justice. They exhibit creativity and perseverance. Although they look gentle on the surface, they are tough on the inside. They have excellent defensive instincts and are resilient. I think they would make excellent politicians.

Canadians of Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese origin, especially, will be celebrating across our nation. Families will gather in their homes, friends will meet at banquets, performers will entertain at spring festivals, and thousands will march in parades to mark this wonderful occasion.

Canadians of all backgrounds will join in the festivities as we share this expression of cross-cultural magic. On behalf of all New Democrats: *Xin nian kuai le. Yang nian kuai le. Gong hey fat choy. Chuc mung nam moi.*

* * *

2015 SCOTTIES TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the best in Canadian women's curling are drawing to the button in the friendly city over nine days ending this Sunday for the 2015 Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

Statements by Members

The opening ceremony at Mosaic Place began with a fly-over from the famous Snowbirds. The good times continued with live entertainment at the HeartStop Lounge and non-stop sweeping at the Moose Jaw Ford Curling Centre.

I would like to extend appreciation to the many local organizers, more than 400 volunteers, and dozens of sponsors for their efforts in showing curlers and fans the best that Moose Jaw has to offer.

Hundreds of thousands of Canadians enjoy this roaring game for its fierce competition and team approach. It is truly one of Canada's greatest games. The cry of skips will be heard throughout this community: "hurry hard".

* * *

[Translation]

MEMRAMCOOK SPORTS WALL OF FAME

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, the town of Memramcook will honour four distinguished individuals for their contributions to professional and amateur sport by adding their names to the town's sports wall of fame.

Henri Cormier was a minor baseball and hockey president, and for a long time he set up a skating rink outside his home for the people of Memramcook.

Georges Gaudet made a number of contributions: he was involved in the golf world and the Jeux de l'Acadie, and he helped to create the wall of fame.

Roméo LeBlanc, who reached the American Hockey League as a referee, unfortunately passed away two days ago. I offer my condolences to his loved ones, and I am pleased that we can celebrate his accomplishments.

Lastly, Eugène "Gene" Gaudet was the chief physical therapist for the Montreal Canadiens and the national team, in addition to his career as a hockey player.

These four sports greats are examples of the strength of character found in the Memramcook valley, and I extend my warmest congratulations to them.

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[English]

CAPTAIN ROY BROWN

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to an incredible constituent of mine, Nadine Carter. Nadine is a sixth grade student in Stouffville who, through diligent and extensive research, has called upon the town to properly recognize World War I flying ace Captain Roy Brown.

Brown was born in Carleton Place, but after the war he moved his home in Whitchurch-Stouffville. In Brown's exemplary period of service, he never once lost a pilot under his command and was credited with shooting down Manfred von Richthofen, otherwise known as the Red Baron.

Since that time, his memory has sadly gone unrecognized in my home town, where he lived out his life. Now, thanks to Nadine, I am working with the town to ensure this oversight is corrected.

Members of this place, of course, know the importance of remembering our heritage and especially remembering those who risk their lives for our freedom. I ask all members to join with me in thanking Nadine Carter for her exemplary research and service to our community.

* * *

● (1405)

UKRAINE

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, February 20, Ukraine will mark the anniversary of Black Thursday, the bloodiest and darkest day in Maidan history. For the first time since independence, more than 100 people were shot or beaten to death during peace time.

Ukrainians were hopeful that in electing a new president and parliament, they would finally achieve closure on a Soviet presence. Sadly, the war on their eastern borders, fronted by Russian arms, has brought strife and a rising death toll of both soldiers and civilians.

In the midst of the strife, I feel it is important to recognize that many in Ukrainian civil society, including young Ukrainians, have stepped away from their careers, determined to forge better governance. I am in communication with one young Ukrainian, Maria Korolenko, who was inspired by her participation in the Maidan and then in an internship in Canada's Parliament. Now back in Ukraine, she is engaged in strengthening regional governance, building a strategy for energy independence, and assisting refugees from eastern Ukraine.

Increased foreign aid and sanctions against Russia are critical, but let us also respond more generously to the calls for our support to Ukraine's civil society in its struggle for strengthened democratic governance.

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ORDER OF ONTARIO

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people of Mississauga know James Murray as a hard-working local businessman, volunteer, and community leader. I was proud to hear that he was among 26 people who have recently received the honour of the Order of Ontario.

The Order of Ontario is the province's highest honour and recognizes individuals who have demonstrated excellence and achievement in any field benefiting the people of Ontario.

Statements by Members

Jim has combined a successful business career in Mississauga and the Greater Toronto Area in the field of commercial real estate, while balancing multiple volunteer roles. Over the past six decades, countless organizations have benefited from his devotion to community service. They include Credit Valley Hospital, Sheridan College, the Living Arts Centre, Peel Regional Police Services Board, the inaugural board of the Peel Children's Aid Foundation, Mississauga Sports Council, the Mayor's Gala, and the Hazel McCallion Foundation for the Arts, Heritage and Culture, to name just a few.

Congratulations, Jim. I thank him for his invaluable contribution to life in Mississauga.

* * *

CANADIAN FLAG

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in this week in which we have celebrated the 50th anniversary of our glorious Canadian flag, I rise today to recognize a constituent affectionately known as "the flag lady of Thornhill".

Marga van den Hogen is the founder of Flag Flyers, dedicated citizens who spread awareness of the maple leaf flag. Omnipresent, it sometimes seems, in various flamboyant dress combinations of red and white, Marga is known to solicit the residential and commercial owners of unadorned flag poles to acquire and proudly fly the flag, and to recommend the replacement of flags that are faded or frayed.

Raising the maple leaf to new heights this week, Marga's persuasive skills led to the electronic red and white wrapping and flapping on Toronto's CN Tower.

As we know, our government, in celebration of the flag's 50th anniversary, is giving commemorative gifts of this proud Canadian symbol to 50 outstanding Canadians. It will be an honour to present one of those mementos to Marga tomorrow in Thornhill.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week I met with Société de transport de l'Outaouais executives.

I can report that they have ambitious plans to maintain the quality and accessibility of our public transit. As a resident of the city's west end, I know just how important the western Rapibus extension is to my Hull—Aylmer constituents.

I am thinking in particular of families in Aylmer. It can be tricky to balance work and family when you spend over an hour a day in traffic. That has to change. The NDP believes that municipalities should be able to count on support from the federal government to tackle that challenge. It is time for a national public transit strategy that will ensure the federal government does its fair share.

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[English]

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night at midnight, thousands of Canadians across

the country, including our Prime Minister, gathered together to ring in the lunar new year.

Over the next two weeks, Canadians of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other backgrounds are marking the arrival of the Year of the Sheep, known to some as the Year of the Goat. They will celebrate the renewal and optimism that comes with a new year, along with family, friends, and their local communities.

The lunar new year brings with it wonderful expressions of tradition and culture, such as the distribution of lucky pockets. It gives families the opportunity to honour their ancestors and pass along beautiful traditions and customs to a new generation.

The lunar new year is also a fantastic opportunity for all Canadians to share in the richness of Asian culture.

On behalf of the Conservative caucus, I wish all Canadians celebrating the lunar new year good luck, prosperity, and success.

Gong hey fat choy; Gong xi fa cai, Chuc mung nam moi!

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

LACHINE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL 1776

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the Knights of Columbus Council 1776 of Lachine. That means 100 years of unity, charity, fraternity and patriotism, 100 years of community service in Lachine and 100 years of volunteering to support families and help fellow citizens.

To the brother knights, I want to thank you for your dedication, your commitment and your movement.

I would have liked to list all the organizations they helped last year, but there are simply too many to name.

I would like to commend the exceptional work of Grand Knight Pierre Parr and his wife, Yvette. I want to thank Michel Dubois for organizing the festivities to celebrate the council's 100th anniversary, and I also want to congratulate all the knights of Council 1776 of Lachine. I am so pleased to be able to share this moment with you.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians support the tax relief our government has brought forward to date and will continue to deliver going forward.

Statements by Members

The Liberal carbon tax is simply not the way to deal with economic issues in our country, and Canadians do not want to be on a path to higher taxes and more debt. Creating a job-killing carbon tax would be reckless and would increase the cost of everything and the tax burden on middle-class families. That would especially hurt low-income families and rural people, the kind I represent.

The Liberal leader first ran for office on the promise of a carbon tax in 2008. This is who he is. Canadians know that the Liberals want to bring in this job-killing carbon tax. This is their goal.

Our Conservative government is lowering taxes for families and putting more money back into their pockets. Keeping taxes low and creating jobs are essential to keeping this economy on the right track. We will never punish Canadians with a job-killing carbon tax.

* * *

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the start of the Chinese New Year, when Chinese and Asian communities around the world will celebrate the Year of the Sheep.

Yesterday, I joined colleagues and the Chinese ambassador at a gala dinner here in Ottawa; and throughout the Greater Toronto Area, our Liberal Party leader is participating in celebratory events with the community. I am personally honoured to host an MP lunar new year reception in Vancouver this weekend; and Vancouver's great parade in Chinatown this Sunday is legendary.

Across our country, Canadians of all ages and cultures will come together to celebrate, and we will reflect on the important role that the Chinese and Asian communities have played in shaping our great nation. On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and its entire parliamentary caucus, I extend our warmest good wishes to all Canadians ringing in the lunar new year. Good health, happiness, and prosperity for all.

Gong hey fat choy. Xin nian kuai le.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit will help 100% of families with children, and the vast majority of benefits go to low- and middle-income families.

With the enhancement of the universal child care benefit, moms and dads in Pickering—Scarborough East and across this country will receive nearly \$2,000 per year for every child under 6 and \$720 per year for every child between the ages of 6 and 17. The NDP and the Liberals will take these benefits away, while imposing more taxes on Canadian families. Instead of giving decision-making power to parents, the NDP and Liberals want the Ottawa bureaucracy telling families what to do. That is not right.

Our government knows that parents know what is best for their kids, and we are proud to be the only party standing up for them.

[Translation]

MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, everywhere the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton goes, catastrophe turns into disaster. As the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, he got his government into trouble a number of times with his hotheaded comments. As the minister for democratic reform, he championed a regressive, unfair bill designed to reduce voter turnout. Now that he is the Minister of Employment and Social Development, we fear the worst. The Social Security Tribunal is completely clogged up. Thousands of people have to wait up to five years to get their file reviewed. People who are seriously ill or in financial difficulty cannot get their case fast-tracked. It is shameful. One might say that the Conservatives are counting on discouragement and death to reduce the wait times.

By appointing the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton to the head of a such a dysfunctional department, the Prime Minister has proven that he has no intention of getting things back on track. Canadians definitely deserve better than this heartless government.

* * *

● (1415)

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, mothers and fathers should be able to make the important decisions that affect their own children. That is why our family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit will give 100% of families with kids across Canada more money to do just that.

Our government trusts parents to make the best decisions for their children. However, both the Liberals and the New Democrats are against putting money back into the pockets of hard-working families. They would take these benefits away so big government bureaucracy could tell Canadian families what they could do with their own money.

On this side of the House, we will not hike taxes like the Liberals and the New Democrats propose. Rather, we are prepared to let parents make their own decisions with their family's finances. That is where the responsibility belongs.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today the U.S. is holding a global summit on countering violent extremism. It is focused on empowering local communities.

As President Obama stated, “the best way to protect people...from falling into the grip of violent extremists is the support of their family, friends, teachers and faith leaders”. In Canada, instead of working with faith leaders to find solutions, the Prime Minister singles out Canada's Muslim community.

Why does the Prime Minister's so-called security bill do nothing to prevent or reverse radicalization?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is patently false. Many departments of government, including the justice department, have cross-cultural round tables. Our security forces themselves are often involved in outreach, and they will continue to do so.

However, with respect to the substance of Bill C-51 before the House, the bill would give tools to our security forces to allow them to do more to prevent terrorism, to prevent violence. That is something that all communities in Canada are interested in and engaged in the discussion.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is what the American forum is also about, but it understands that efforts have to be included for anti-radicalization. There is not one word in the government's bill on anti-radicalization.

The bill would give CSIS the power to “disrupt security threats”. Right now, CSIS collects intelligence and the RCMP disrupts threats by arresting those who are conspiring to commit a crime. Therefore, precisely what new powers would CSIS be given to disrupt threats under the bill? What does that mean? Could the minister give us a single example?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is one of the most important elements of the bill, enabling CSIS to do just that, to disrupt and in some cases to take down material that could be used for radicalization. The hon. member again is incorrect in his assessment of the bill.

This is a comprehensive bill. This is a bill that involves oversight for those new powers. This is a bill that Canadians are responding to very positively, unlike the position staked out by the NDP.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): It is the same thing as yesterday, Mr. Speaker. The government cannot give one single example.

[Translation]

Once again, the government is trying to associate security threats with terrorist activity. According to internal documents, the RCMP describes groups that oppose major polluters, such as environmental groups and first nations, as security threats.

Under the Prime Minister's bill, will CSIS have the authority to investigate such groups? Do you also have environmental groups and first nations in your sights?

[English]

The Speaker: I would just remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition to address his questions through the Chair and not directly at other members.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

• (1420)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again the Leader of the Opposition is trying to scare Canadians into thinking that they will be targeted, and that is absolutely not the intent of the bill. In fact, one only has to read the bill to see that they will not be targeted. It states specifically that any activity undermining Canada's security does not include lawful advocacy, protest, dissent or artistic expression.

The type of activity the hon. member is describing is not going to be targeted by CSIS or the RCMP.

* * *

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, based on what the RCMP has already written, it is clear that CSIS will be allowed to investigate environmental groups and first nations. That is the truth.

The Conservatives have totally failed on their promise to streamline the appeal process for Canada pension plan and employment insurance. The backlog for income security appeals was up 24% last year. Worse yet, dozens of sick, dying and financially desperate Canadians were denied their request for expedited hearings. These are middle-class families and Canadian seniors struggling just to get by during the most difficult times of their lives.

Why has the Conservative government made them wait longer than they have to wait to get a fair hearing?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we agree that the backlog is unacceptable. That is why my predecessor put in place a practical plan to eliminate that backlog by this summer. We are using experts within the department to review all of the cases that are under appeal to see if we can settle as many of them as humanly possible so they do not even have to go before the tribunal at all.

I met with my officials this week and have confirmed that they are on track to achieving our goal.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is absolute rubbish, because the tribunal's backlog continues to grow.

Oral Questions

The majority of Canadians are denied an expedited hearing. That is the reality. Instead of improving the appeal process, the Prime Minister has put in place a system based on favouritism and patronage. One-third of the tribunal members appointed are Conservative Party cronies.

Why does the Prime Minister put Conservative cronies ahead of seniors and families in need?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is wrong. Tribunal members have the necessary qualifications and experience to do their job.

We agree that the wait time is too long right now. That is why my predecessor instructed his officials to review all cases to prevent claimants from having to go before the tribunals.

We expect to eliminate the backlog before the summer, and my officials confirmed this week that we are going to do that.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we want a strong economy, we need economic certainty and stability.

The GDP shows that our national economy is on the decline, the quality of jobs is going down, and our country lost \$28 billion in capital investments in December alone, so why do the Conservatives continue to create uncertainty and instability?

Why do they refuse to immediately table a budget, so we can get the economic certainty we so desperately need?

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the best job creation record in the G7 with almost 1.2 million net new jobs created since the depths of the global recession. The vast majority of these jobs were full time, in the private sector and in high wage industries.

Our government has a low tax plan for jobs and growth for all sectors of the Canadian economy that is working and will return Canada to a balanced budget this year.

We are proud of our plan that is lowering taxes and providing benefits directly to families for them to reinvest in the Canadian economy.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with yet another forecast of recessions in Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador, with the latest GDP figures showing the national economy is shrinking too, with nearly \$28 billion in investor capital fleeing the country in December, with anaemic job creation, poor job quality and weak labour market participation, the government keeps punting its overdue budget deeper and deeper into the next fiscal year, into May or even later.

Canada needs an urgent budget that invests in real growth right now, so why not?

• (1425)

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, because of the instability in the oil market, we will not bring forward the budget before April.

I can assure the member opposite that our government will continue our low tax plan for jobs and growth for all sectors of the Canadian economy. That is working and will return Canada to a balanced budget this year. We are proud of our plan that is working, and we will stick to that plan.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): However, there are no jobs and no growth, Mr. Speaker.

Canada needs to be far more aggressive on public infrastructure. Who said so? The G20, the IMF, the Bank of Canada, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, all of the premiers, every municipality, every think tank from C.D. Howe to the Canada West Foundation, the Chambers of Commerce, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, the Canadian Labour Congress, and many more. The only one who is saying that the feds are doing enough is the beleaguered government, and it cannot even get its act together to table a budget. If it will not lead, will you please get out of the way.

The Speaker: Order, please. Some members might be confused that the member for Wascana was talking to the Chair and not the person to whom he was directing that question. I plan on staying here for at least the next 35 minutes.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on what matters to Canadians: jobs and economic growth. Around 1.2 million net new jobs have been created since the depths of the recession.

It is rich that the Liberals would be criticizing our record on job creation because they have voted against every job creation measure that we have introduced, including freezing EI rates, tax cuts for manufacturers, the \$75 billion in stable and predictable job-creating infrastructure, and more.

The Liberal leader does not even have a plan, and he thinks budgets balance themselves.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, so much for not railroading Bill C-51 through the House, as the Conservatives could not even wait 24 hours to limit debate on this bad bill. That is in pretty strong contrast to the U.S. President, who is out talking about what works to counter terrorism. Here is what President Obama said: "...we need to do what extremists and terrorists hope we will not do, and that is stay true to the values that define us as free and diverse societies".

We do not need divisive rhetoric and limited debate. Why is this always the Conservatives' approach, even on such an important topic as threats to our national security?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the most important Canadian values is that of security, feeling safe in one's community, home, and place of work. This is a bill that has targeted measures, with oversight, aimed specifically at giving our security forces the important tools they need, the important support they need, often in a very dangerous and evolving world that involves terrorism.

This bill will receive scrutiny by this House and by the committee. Canadians, including the four out of five who support this bill, will have a safer and more secure country.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the government is so confident in this bill, why is limiting the debate?

The minister would do better if he took a hint from the U.S. President, who has appointed a full-time coordinator at Homeland Security dedicated to stopping violent extremism before it takes root. What a contrast. Here in Canada we have RCMP and CSIS budget cuts, and community engagement plans left to languish on the drawing board for years.

Why are the Conservatives ignoring anti-terrorism measures that work, and pushing a dangerous bill that will not?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the majority of Canadians are going to take the word of the NDP that these measures will not work. In fact, some of these important and practical measures, including the ability of our security forces, include authorities to take these practical actions to prevent radicalization. By that, I mean the ability to take material down, to take material off the websites and off the Internet that can be very instrumental in radicalization.

Those steps, along with many others included in this array of security measures, including the outreach necessary, are there to see that Canadians understand that this government and this Parliament are working in their best interests.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the scope of Bill C-51 is far too broad and provides far too many new powers for CSIS.

The Minister of Public Safety has yet to give a single example of the types of activities CSIS could carry out in order to disrupt threats. Experts believe that this could include activities such as spreading incorrect information about a group or individual.

Oral Questions

Could the minister tell us whether this is actually the case?

• (1430)

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm what the Minister of Public Safety has said, along with the Prime Minister and others, that throughout this process there will be ample opportunity to go into the details. What I can confirm is that our security forces will have better ability to protect Canadians in targeted and practical ways, with oversight and the ability of judges to examine the types of activities that take place, as well as the oversight of the civilian SIRC, which is also there to ensure they that are complying with the law. Throughout this process we will continue to reach out and speak to Canadians and seek their input.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is getting increasingly difficult for us to believe that the government will properly oversee security agencies.

When the RCMP produces a report referring to activists as people who claim that climate change is the main threat to the environment and that it is apparently connected to fossil fuels, it is really difficult to take them seriously.

Does the minister think that it is the RCMP's job to play with etymology to look into the causes of climate change?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is where the hon. member is missing the important element of judicial oversight and judicial input into decisions when they are seeking warrants and certain detentions. As I have already explained to the leader of her party, there are exemptions with respect to the activity of Canada's security forces, which will not target lawful advocacy, protest, dissent, or artistic expression. Those types of activities will not be the target of RCMP or CSIS activities.

* * *

[Translation]

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Social Security Tribunal of Canada still has a backlog of 14,000 files. Yes, you heard me correctly. I said 14,000.

Some of those files concern Canadians who are seriously ill or are having financial difficulties. They are desperately waiting for their files to be processed. There is a fast-track procedure for them, but most of the time the Conservatives refuse to process those claims.

Is the minister counting on complainants giving up or dying in order to shorten his waiting list?

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Not at all, Mr. Speaker.

The plan that my predecessor put in place encourages departmental staff to review each of the appeals and settle them so that they do not need to go before the tribunal. That will help us reduce and eliminate the long-term waiting list before the end of the summer.

We will therefore continue working with our departmental employees to complete this task.

[English]

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): More delays, Mr. Speaker, while more than 14,000 Canadians are currently waiting for a Social Security Tribunal hearing. Wait times for some cases are more than seven years. We can only assume that the Conservatives are hoping that people will give up before they ever get benefits. The tribunal has refused the vast majority of requests for an expedited hearing. This is blatant incompetence, and Canadians are paying the price.

Why did the Conservatives set up such a bad process for this tribunal?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member does not accurately describe the plan that we are implementing to eliminate the backlog. The plan is for experts within the department to take a second look at the cases that are currently under appeal to ascertain if there is new information that might help us settle those cases. When these are settled, then they will not need to go before the tribunal, which would save time. Our goal is to eliminate that backlog by the summer. I spoke to my officials this week on this very subject and they confirmed that we are on track to achieve that goal.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have seen how the Conservatives deal with backlogs, by wiping them out while ignoring the rights of the people affected by the backlogs.

The Conservatives have done everything they can to delay, deny, and discourage Canadians who are waiting to get benefits. How do we know this new process would not be another Conservative whitewash so they can deny people's benefits even faster?

What assurances can the minister give Canadians that they will get due process and a fair decision at these tribunals?

• (1435)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hope is that many of them would not have to get to the tribunal at all, because they could be settled before they even go there.

However, for those whom we fail to reach a settlement with, they would continue to have the right to go through the general, and, if necessary, the appeal, division of this quasi-judicial body that is the tribunal. All the rights they currently have would be upheld; the only difference is that we are working with experts in the department to settle these cases as quickly as possible, where possible.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives create a massive backlog and then want credit for pretending to even help clean up the mess they created.

It is also like this when it comes to the economy, an economy that is hemorrhaging jobs in the energy sector, the service sector, and the retail sector.

It has been weeks since the current finance minister even answered a single question in the House of Commons, and the Conservatives' answer to a struggling economy is to deny there is a problem; delay any action by not bringing in a budget; and desperately hope the problem will simply go away on its own. Trying to change the channel on this issue will not help the almost 1.3 million Canadians who are out of a job.

When are we finally going to see the current finance minister get off the bench and bring in a plan to help Canadians get back to work?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. It is called the low-tax plan for jobs and growth. The facts are in: it is working. We have 1.2 million net new jobs. I hear the Liberals claim that they are part-time jobs. In fact, 80% of them are full-time jobs; 80% of them are in the private sector; and 60% of them are in high-wage industries.

The reality is that on this side, we know that when we cut taxes and give job creators a chance to move ahead, they hire more people and create more jobs. The NDP and the Liberals would raise taxes, destabilize our economy, and kill jobs. We will not let them.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are saying that they do not have any money for the middle class. If everyone did his or her part, there would be money. The money is there.

Just before Christmas, the Royal Bank of Canada was caught red-handed by the Americans for orchestrating a transfer of funds to tax havens. The American government recovered \$35 million.

Did the minister at least even try to recover the amounts that are owed to the crown? How does she explain the fact that the white-collar criminal who devised this strategy is still working for the Royal Bank of Canada?

[English]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has a strong record of combatting tax evasion and getting tough on tax cheats, including obtaining information from our international partners on Canadians with offshore assets. Since forming government, we have introduced over 85 measures to improve the integrity of the tax system. Shamefully, the NDP and Liberals have voted against every single one of those measures.

This government stands up for taxpayers. We have zero tolerance for tax evasion. We are actively working on all of these files.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the respected Conference of Defence Associations released a damning report on the Conservative government's mismanagement and budget cuts to National Defence. The report states:

The reality is that we are entering a period of continued decline, diminished [Canadian Armed Forces'] capabilities and capacities, less training and lower output, with consequently reduced influence on the world stage and weakened contribution to our own security, domestic and international.

Why are the Conservatives so undermining the Canadian Armed Forces? Why are they still pretending they support them?

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very rich for the Liberals to try to preach that we have not spent enough on our Armed Forces when they oversaw a decade of darkness that gutted our armed forces. They could not make one single purchase. All they ever did was cancel helicopter contracts.

We are replacing all of our equipment. We have upgraded. We have new C-17s. We have new Chinook helicopters. We have new, upgraded frigates. We have the national shipbuilding program. We are giving the tools, the equipment, and the resources to our members of the Canadian Armed Forces they need to do the job.

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[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for three years, the former minister of foreign affairs quietly postponed the approved plan to invest in embassy security. It is disturbing to learn that improvements to ensure the security of official residences in Islamabad, Kabul and Port-au-Prince were not made, thus endangering our diplomatic staff. It looks like that spending was postponed to help the government show a budget surplus for this election year.

Why is the government jeopardizing the security of our Canadian diplomats?

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. The safety and security of our diplomats abroad is my foremost priority as foreign minister.

To suggest that we are compromising security at our missions in order to cut costs is, quite frankly, false and offensive. Every single cent allocated by cabinet and Parliament is available to meet the security needs of our diplomats, and we will continue to spend whatever is necessary to keep them safe.

Oral Questions

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice said earlier that SIRC provides oversight in this new bill. He knows that is not accurate. The members on the Security Intelligence Review Committee themselves said they do not provide oversight, but review.

Yet, the Minister of Justice, in 2004 signed onto an all-party report calling for parliamentary oversight, like our democratic partners have, the U.K., United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Whatever happened to the minister's interest in balancing security and civil liberties with strong parliamentary oversight? Why is he not with us on that today?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, through the hyperventilation and rhetoric of the member, I heard a question that pertained to the oversight and work of SIRC.

Yes, indeed, there were recommendations that came from a Parliament over 10 years ago. If memory serves me right, there was a period of time, albeit a difficult time for the country, when the member himself was the solicitor general of Canada. If I am correct in saying so, he and his government rejected that recommendation for further parliamentary oversight, and so hypocrisy knows no bounds with the member opposite.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the safety of first nations is at stake. First nations like Makwa Sahgaiehcan were left with no fire protection services, which cost the lives of two children. First nations and Canadians across this country have been moved by this tragedy and want action from the federal government. However, instead of stepping up, the minister chooses to blame everyone else.

This cannot happen again. What will the minister do to ensure that this kind of tragedy not only does not happen but that first nations will have the kind of services and equipment they need and deserve in their communities?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these deaths are a tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers remain with the family of the victims. As we speak, the RCMP is investigating the events that led to this tragedy.

I want to assure the House and Canadians that this particular band has received consistent funding for fire protection services over the years. As a matter of fact, the Government of Canada provides first nations across the country with funds every year for fire protection. Each band council is responsible for fire management and protection on reserve.

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility of the government to protect and ensure the safety of all its citizens, no matter where they live.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

People who live on reserves in Canada are 10 times more likely to die in a fire, but what is the irresponsible minister doing? He is avoiding our questions.

Does he think it is okay for children to be dying in fires in Canada in 2015 while adults argue over a bill?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member that it is not okay at all, especially considering that first nations get money every year to look after fire protection.

As I said earlier, the RCMP is investigating what happened in that particular case, and we will see what conclusions it draws. However, one thing is for sure: that community, like all others in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and across the country, receives adequate funding every year to look after fire protection.

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•(1445)

*[English]***CANADA POST**

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, an 81-year-old man in Windsor received eight stitches around his eye because he fell when he went to pick up his mail from the community mailbox. The reason was that there was three feet of ice and snow around that community mailbox. In spite of numerous requests to Canada Post to come and clear it, which were ignored, that snow was there, and that gentleman fell and injured himself.

Does the minister understand that the plan to give us community mailboxes and get rid of door-to-door service affects seniors, or does she just agree with the CEO of Canada Post, who said that they should just get some exercise?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, on the issue of what happened to this poor gentleman in Windsor, is absolutely correct. Canada Post has a responsibility that is very serious, and that is to ensure that community mailboxes have paths cleared to them. It was notified of this several times, according to the newspaper article. Our office has been in contact as well.

Converting to community mailboxes has an inherent responsibility to do so safely, and we expect nothing less from Canada Post.

[Translation]

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the disappearance of home mail delivery is a nightmare for people, especially those with disabilities.

A visually impaired person from Honoré-Mercier told me that he had to cross several intersections to get to the community mailboxes.

Why did the Conservatives make such a serious decision without consulting the municipalities and community groups such as the Regroupement des aveugles et amblyopes du Montréal métropolitain, an association of people with visual impairments?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Canada Post's five-point plan, one of them is converting to community mailboxes. It did have consultation across the country. It is now implementing it, and it is working with Canadian municipalities.

Indeed, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities had a resolution before it in 2014 in Niagara Falls, where it was proposed that it have the position that Canada Post maintain the current system of residential door-to-door delivery in Canada. The resolution was defeated, 311 votes to 185 votes. Municipalities agree with us that this is the way to go.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we often hear the opposition complaining about the infrastructure investments from our government. It is quite puzzling, when we know that the Conservative government has made record investments and will continue to do so for the next decade with \$75 billion.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs inform the House, and especially the opposition, about Canada's performance in infrastructure investment since 2006?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since we took office in 2006, Canada has consistently ranked atop the G7 countries in total investment in infrastructure as a percentage of GDP. It is quite a contrast with the Liberal years, when we were sitting at the bottom of the group.

The new building Canada plan is the largest and longest infrastructure plan in the history of this country. We are clearly the champion of infrastructure under the leadership of our Prime Minister.

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*[Translation]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are trying to save money at the expense of the security of our diplomatic corps abroad.

If we send diplomatic staff to high-risk areas, the least we can do is keep them safe and provide proper protection.

Could we finally have a minister with a long-term vision who will put an end to his predecessor's administrative shenanigans and invest in proper protection for our diplomatic corps?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP and the hon. member have it completely wrong. The safety and security of our diplomats abroad is my foremost priority as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and this has been consistent throughout our term in office. To suggest that we are compromising security at our missions to cut costs is quite frankly false and offensive.

We will ensure that any non-security related upgrades provide value for taxpayers' dollars, but we will protect those individuals who are serving Canada abroad.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is what is offensive. In the last three years, Foreign Affairs has cut \$148 million for security upgrades at embassies. These security upgrades are not a luxury. The department itself called them urgent.

Let us never forget, we lost a diplomat, Glyn Berry, in Afghanistan, and we saw the devastation in Benghazi when U.S. diplomats were attacked by extremists.

The question is, why is the government putting the lives of our brave men and women on the line? These are the facts from the minister's own department; it was \$148 million that was cut. He cannot deny those facts.

• (1450)

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is completely wrong. We have been consistent that the security of our men and women in all our diplomatic offices around the world are our number one priority. To suggest anything else is completely false.

We will go forward and we will ensure, as we have in the past, their safety and security.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today many Canadians were asking themselves this question: Who is the actual Minister of Foreign Affairs? It was not the actual Minister of Foreign Affairs, after all, who greeted the Queen at Canada House. It was the former member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

Would the actual Minister of Foreign Affairs please stand up and explain why John Baird would play minister in London?

The Speaker: The hon. member may have inadvertently used the proper name of the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the renovations to Canada House are a testament to the enduring relationship between the United Kingdom and Canada. We can all be very, very proud of that.

I will tell members something else I am proud about. I am very proud that the member for Ottawa West—Nepean, a privy councillor and an outstanding foreign affairs minister, was there to open this house on behalf of Canada.

*[Translation]***RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, almost two years after the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, a watchdog committee has just been formed.

The members are dissatisfied with the safety measures put in place, they are not confident that the government will protect them, and they are still being kept in the dark. Furthermore, Transport Canada is not even returning their calls.

Will the minister at least mend relations with the people of Lac-Mégantic?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in general, the health and safety of Canadians is our top priority.

There are rules in place for railways to operate within. If these rules are not being followed, then it is appropriate for Transport Canada to ensure that there is enforcement. If the community or the public understand that there is a problem in their area, they should report it to Transport Canada.

If what the member says is correct, that Transport Canada is not responding, I will ensure that they do.

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*[Translation]***CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a disturbing CFIB study has forced the Canada Revenue Agency to evaluate its own services. The study found that one-quarter of the agency's telephone answers were incorrect. Some employees even advised things that are illegal. Canadians who have followed that advice are being penalized. The agency itself admits that its communications are muddled and disorganized and lack professionalism.

When will the Conservative government finally take action, and what is the minister doing to replace the ombudsman, who stepped down eight months ago?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about the results of the investigation in question. The CRA commissioned that study in order to improve its services to Canadians. We expect the CRA to take immediate action to resolve the issues raised in this investigation and improve the services it provides to Canadians.

We encourage anyone who believes they may have received incorrect information from the CRA to file a formal complaint.

[English]

We take this seriously. This was commissioned by CRA to improve services.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, then the ombudsman must be replaced as soon as possible.

The building of pipelines causes enough problems in Canada without adding language problems to the mix. That is what is happening in Quebec in the case of the National Energy Board hearings on the energy east pipeline project.

Will the government ensure that the language problem is solved, or will it show its usual indifference towards official languages issues?

• (1455)

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the National Energy Board has fulfilled its obligations under the Official Languages Act. All of the documents produced by the National Energy Board must be published in both official languages. Questions related to documents filed by the applicant should be directed to the project proponent.

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[English]

PARKS CANADA

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after years of drastic cuts to Parks Canada, now we need volunteers to keep the parks open. The Conservative government funds hand-picked trails and private clubs. Canada's national parks are forced to scale back or shut their gates for the winter, but a study by Canadian Parks Council shows that an \$800-million investment in parks can create \$5 billion in economic activity in our local communities. Those are local jobs.

Why is the government abandoning Canada's parks and squandering both the environmental and economic benefits?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been no reductions in the Parks Canada budget. In fact, the overall budget has increased by 26%. This is in addition to the \$391 million we announced in economic action plan 2014 to maintain and upgrade Parks Canada infrastructure. These investments will ensure that Canadians and visitors are safe and continue to enjoy our country's natural heritage.

Our government launched the national conservation plan last year, which includes new investments to secure ecologically sensitive lands, conserve marine and coastal areas, and connect Canadians to nature.

* * *

[Translation]

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, 15,000 people in the Pontiac were cut off from the world. They had no phone, no Internet, and no way of calling 911 or emergency services. What is more, this happened in an area that has poor cellphone coverage.

This is the fifth time something like this has happened in six years. However, the CRTC refuses to force Bell Canada to improve its network.

How many more times will the government allow the people of the Pontiac to be treated like second-class citizens?

[English]

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can tell members that protecting consumers in cases like this is a priority for this government. We have, in fact, increased competition in the wireless market, making it a priority for Canadians and for our government.

Canadians know that competition is good for everyone. It not only lowers prices but brings better services for both Canadians and businesses. We will keep doing exactly that.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituents strongly believe in keeping our communities safe by ensuring that our borders are safe and effective. Many dangerous foreign criminals find their way into Canada and terrorize our communities.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness please advise the House on what our government is doing to get tough on foreign criminals?

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for that question and for his work on the public safety committee.

Our Conservative government is committed to sending dangerous criminals back to where they came from. That is why we created the wanted by the CBSA program: to enlist the help of Canadians to remove these dangerous individuals.

I would like today to commend the CBSA on the 60th arrest of a criminal on the wanted by CBSA list. This list has proven, once again, to be a highly effective tool that leads to the apprehension of individuals who threaten the safety and security of Canadians.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2006 Conservatives have spent more than \$2.3 million of taxpayers' money on hiring photographers to take pictures of ministers making announcements. Ministers of Veterans Affairs are some of the highest spenders, at nearly \$120,000. Since 2006, Veterans Affairs has increased its wasteful spending by an obscene 7,000%. The money spent by Conservatives on vanity photographers could have kept the Veterans Affairs office in Cape Breton open.

Oral Questions

Why are photos of themselves more important than the Cape Breton veterans?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, any government of Canada has an obligation to communicate with the public, and we take our responsibilities to taxpayers very seriously in this regard.

Of course, when that member's party was in government and spent money on advertising, it actually did not spend it on advertising. It went into the pockets of their confreres in the party. We do not do that.

* * *

●(1500)

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first the Conservatives closed the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. Now they want to close the marine communications and traffic services centres in Vancouver, Comox, and Ucluelet. Responses to environmental emergencies, oil spills, and accidents for the entire coast of British Columbia are going to be centralized. Just recently, the Ucluelet centre helped with the rescue of four sailors. The centre was listening on local VHF and heard the mayday signal.

We know the importance of these centres, so why are the Conservatives closing them?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Coast Guard is modernizing a number of marine communications and traffic services centres. When this exercise is completed, there will be state-of-the-art technology in place from coast to coast to coast, which will improve the safety of mariners.

Our government is making important investments to provide the Coast Guard with the tools necessary to provide mariners in Canadian waters with world-class service, and we are proud to invest in the Canadian Coast Guard for the safety of mariners.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night marked the arrival of lunar new year across Canada.

Gong hey fat choy.

This has become an amazing Canadian tradition that brings together Canadians of all backgrounds in celebration. In fact, the Asian new year celebration to occur this Saturday in West Vancouver has become an annual highlight in the whole community. I thank over 100 volunteers of Chinese, Korean, and Filipino background who have combined to make this happen.

Could the bagpipe-playing Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism please tell us how the lunar new year is being marked across Canada by our government and others?

Mr. Chungsen Leung (Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today lunar new year is celebrated across the country by many Canadians, including Chinese,

Vietnamese, Korean, Tibetan, and other communities from East Asia.

Just last night our Prime Minister joined thousands in Richmond, B.C., to mark the arrival of the lunar new year. The Minister for Multiculturalism and the Minister of State for Multiculturalism also joined large community celebrations in Toronto. Over the next few weeks, my parliamentary colleagues and I will take part in celebrations across the country, including here on Parliament Hill.

As we mark the year of the ram or goat, I would like to wish all Canadians peace, prosperity, and good health for the year ahead.

* * *

MARINE TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, Marine Atlantic is without a doubt the most important single lifeline to the island of Newfoundland. However, in recent years it has come under much scrutiny, as travellers are finding it more and more difficult to travel to and from the island using the ferry system. Delays, cancellation, and high cost of travel have begun to deter people from using this service, and the cost of transporting goods has risen substantially in the past number of years.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve a reliable ferry service, as per our terms of union. Will the government commit to an independent audit of Marine Atlantic to ensure that the ferry service is operating at its full potential and at maximum operational efficiency?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we take the responsibility we have with Marine Atlantic very seriously. It is an independent crown corporation that is set up to deliver this service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

That said, our government has played a strong role in supporting Marine Atlantic in the past number of years. We have seen incredible investment with respect to both ferries and terminals. In my hometown of Sydney, Nova Scotia, for example, in North Sydney there is a brand new terminal being built there.

It is this government that is doing that. It is this government that is ensuring that Marine Atlantic has the ability to deliver on its mandate.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, some Canadian families are living with the pain of losing a child who decided to fight abroad with groups such as Daesh. These families are unable to grieve because they are unable to obtain death certificates from provincial authorities even though in a number of cases, CSIS and the RCMP can confirm these deaths.

Can the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness issue a directive to ensure that in these cases—again, in these cases—the families receive an official letter confirming the death of their children so that they can begin the grieving process?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is always concerned when Canadians are in trouble beyond our borders. Our consular services operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through a network of more than 260 offices in over 150 countries. We are committed to providing the best possible consular assistance in every region of the world.

● (1505)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask for unanimous consent to table a document. It is a report of the public safety committee, which states that Bill C-81, which was supported by all parties and died on the order paper just a few days later when the—

The Speaker: Order, please. There seemed to be early indications of a lack of consent when the member started, so I am going to interpret that he does not have the consent of the House at this time. Maybe he can try another method of getting it in front of the members.

* * *

*[Translation]***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have good news and bad news.

The good news is that there are only 12 more weeks of sittings before the end of this Parliament and the end of this government. That is good news for all Canadians. The bad news is that the government is continuing to wreak havoc.

Earlier, this government moved its 88th closure and time allocation motion. That is a sorry record. We have never seen the like in the history of Canadian Parliament. This time, the notice of motion was given after only three parliamentarians had the chance to speak to Bill C-51.

Although we have not been given a lot of answers, the government would prefer to steamroll this bill through, even though Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about this bill's flaws and problems.

The reality is that this government always refuses to work with the opposition members, unless they comply with its agenda.

Fortunately, the other good news is that all this will change on October 19, 2015, because Canadians will have the opportunity to vote for a new NDP government, which will restore respect for Parliament.

My question is for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. Next week, will the government finally learn its lesson and begin working with parliamentarians? What is the government's plan for next week?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue debating Bill C-51, the anti-terrorism act, 2015, at second reading. These measures will keep Canada secure from evolving threats.

Of course it is important in the context that we live in today that these important measures to keep Canadians safe and combat terrorism do become law during this Parliament. In order to ensure that happens, the debate will continue on Monday, and thanks to an order of this House adopted earlier this day, we are able to have certainty that we will have a vote on it at that time.

Tomorrow we will have the 10th day of debate on Bill C-32, the victims bill of rights act. That afternoon we will wrap up the third reading debate of these measures, which will place victims at the heart of our justice system.

[Translation]

Tuesday shall be the fifth allotted day, which will see us debate a proposal from the Liberal Party. That evening, we will have a take note debate on the troubling rise of anti-Semitism around the world.

[English]

This important take-note debate will be on the disturbing rise of anti-Semitism around the world, and we are very much looking forward to seeing this topic discussed. I want to thank the Minister for Multiculturalism and the member for Mount Royal for their persistence in this initiative.

On Wednesday we will turn to Bill C-2, the respect for communities act, for another day of debate at report stage. It will be the 12th day that this bill has been considered by the House. With luck, the opposition will stop holding up this important proposal and let regular, ordinary Canadian citizens have a meaningful say when people want to come to their communities to set up a drug injection site operation.

[Translation]

Then, on Thursday, we will resume the second reading debate on Bill C-46, the Pipeline Safety Act, which aims to establish world-class safety standards for pipelines in Canada.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1510)

*[Translation]***ANTI-TERRORISM ACT, 2015**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-51, An Act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and the Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-51, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, introduced by the Conservative government.

Government Orders

I want to start by talking about what has happened since the debate started in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, less than 24 hours after the debate on Bill C-51 started, the Conservative government moved a time allocation motion to restrict the time for debate. This is the 88th time that the Conservative government has done this in the House—an all-time high. There is no pride to be taken in preventing parliamentarians from doing their job.

I had to wonder why the Conservatives moved this time allocation motion, since when they introduced Bill C-51, they promised to all Canadians and parliamentarians that they would take the time to debate the bill. However, less than 24 hours after the debate started, they moved a time allocation motion. What is going on?

Yesterday, over 22,000 people signed a petition against Bill C-51. This morning, former prime ministers, retired Supreme Court justices and other prominent Canadians released a letter expressing major concerns about several aspects of Bill C-51, specifically those relating to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

The more we talk about Bill C-51 with the people we represent in our communities, and the more the experts say about this, the more we realize that this is not the right way to combat terrorism and radicalization here in Canada or elsewhere in the world. It is unfortunate that the Conservative government is doing this, but it is not a surprise.

I would like to comment on some remarks that the hon. member for Medicine Hat made in his speech just before question period. First of all, partisanship has no place in a debate on terrorism and radicalization. As parliamentarians, we are capable of debating. Second of all, there is no place for grandstanding and mockery in this debate. I think that, unfortunately, the member for Medicine Hat lacked respect in the context of the debate on Bill C-51.

We are debating an extremely important bill and he is accusing the NDP of wanting to hug terrorists just because we are opposed to Bill C-51. Nothing could be more ridiculous in the House today. I hope my colleague will take the time to apologize in the House for his comments, because they add nothing to a debate that should be respectful and orderly.

A number of members from across the way then said that we had less time for debate because the official opposition took too much time to vote on the Conservatives' time allocation motion. That too is ridiculous. We do not have enough time to debate, not because we took too long to vote, but because they moved another time allocation motion after just 24 hours. They should set the record straight, across the way.

They also accused the official opposition of playing partisan politics with Bill C-51.

I want to talk about the process that led us to study this bill very carefully because Canadians need to understand the work of the official opposition and what the Conservative government is in the process of doing with this bill on terrorism.

We believe that the extremely important Bill C-51 was a response to the attacks in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Instead of presenting this bill in the usual way, in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister presented it during a partisan

gathering, hundreds of kilometres away from Parliament Hill. The Conservatives are already in campaign mode and this bill is part of their campaign.

• (1515)

The Conservatives are already trumpeting this everywhere as if it were the best way to counter terrorism. Partisanship had no place in this debate and certainly not like that.

I must say, I am very proud of the work done by the official opposition on this file, especially by the Leader of the Opposition and my hon. colleague, the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. As soon as we saw Bill C-51, we noticed how big it is and saw that it affects many different aspects of various laws, including legislation on citizenship and immigration as well as CSIS. We thought it was important to examine it carefully, because with the Conservatives, the devil is often in the details, and that is certainly true in the case of this bill.

The bill is huge. I want to explain why we oppose it, because it is important to do so. When Bill C-44 was introduced to amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, we decided to vote with the government. It was a fair tactic, since we wanted to send the bill to committee and try to work together. Work in committee was extremely tedious and difficult because the Conservatives stymied us at every turn. Everything was very restricted: the number of sessions dedicated to witnesses, the number of witnesses we were allowed to invite and the time we were given to examine each clause of the bill. We gave the Conservatives a chance on a bill that we did not wholeheartedly support. We thought we could at least try to improve it.

Bill C-51 is so broad and touches on so many things at the same time. Not only does it cast a wide net, but it is dangerously vague and ineffective. In order to solve such complex and specific problems as terrorism and radicalization here in Canada, we need concrete objectives. The government cannot cast such a wide net as it does with Bill C-51, which does not directly target the problem. Instead, this bill tries to make it look like something is being done, which is not really the case, particularly since it does not propose proven and effective measures. Among other things, it puts partisan politics ahead of the protection of Canadians. I am extremely disappointed by that.

It is important to say that terrorism is a real threat. Everyone here agrees that public safety is one of the top priorities of any government anywhere in the world. Canadians really do not have to choose between public safety and civil liberties. However, with Bill C-51, the government is trying to have us make a false choice. We are told that public safety and civil liberties go hand in hand. I agree completely. However, Bill C-51 contains absolutely nothing that will improve civilian oversight of CSIS, which will be given many new powers with this bill. The government is not striking a balance with civilian oversight.

Government Orders

There is a problem with the civilian oversight mechanism at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. First of all, in 2012, in one of its omnibus bills, the government decided to eliminate the position of inspector general of CSIS. This individual reported on what was going on at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. The civilian oversight agency currently responsible for reviewing the activities of CSIS is flawed. These people are appointed by the Conservative government. Members will remember Arthur Porter who, coincidentally, was appointed to this body. What an excellent choice. Furthermore, the oversight mechanism does not work because not all of the positions have been filled. There is not a full complement of competent individuals at this time. Also, the mechanism works on a part-time basis half of the time.

The government often tells us that this is a very effective civilian oversight mechanism, but in reality that is not the case. According to the provisions of Bill C-51 regarding the existing civilian oversight mechanism as it exists today, it is CSIS itself that chooses what might violate the laws governing its own operations and thus decides what it will report to the civilian oversight mechanism.

● (1520)

CSIS itself chooses what must be investigated through its civilian oversight mechanism. That does not make any sense.

I do not want to say that the government is lying to Canadians when it says that Bill C-51 establishes a balance between public safety and civil liberties, but it is coming quite close to it.

Here is another interesting thing about Bill C-51. For weeks, we have been asking questions of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister. They tell us that CSIS will be able to disrupt threats in Canada targeting the Canadian economy and infrastructure. However, no one on the other side of the House was able to give a single example of what is meant by disrupting a threat to the Canadian economy or disrupting a threat to Canadian infrastructure. Those statements can mean many things and are very broad.

The government is saying that it is trying to deal with terrorism. However, the Conservatives have a tendency to use measures in this sort of bill to achieve completely different goals. Today, during question period, we asked whether this would create problems for environmentalists who protest against the oil sands, for example. Will those people be affected by this bill? Will the first nations who sometimes put up roadblocks to protest government decisions be affected by Bill C-51? Given the way the bill is worded, they absolutely will be. The problem is that the members opposite refuse to admit that.

I would have liked to quote the exact words of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, but he said something along the lines of: we do not want to get bogged down in definitions. This is a bill on terrorism. The right definitions are exactly what we should have, especially when it comes to problems as complex as radicalization and terrorism. I sincerely believe this is amateur hour. I do not know whether the Minister of Public Safety even read his own bill and understood it. If he understood it, then he would have realized that it goes a bit too far and he could have considered some of the ramifications. However, there is still no answer from the Conservative government.

I hope, if the hon. members across the way ask me questions, to get some examples that directly concern infrastructure or threats to the Canadian economy, and what impact this might have exactly. I look forward to hearing what the hon. members have to say about this.

I said that the terrorist threat is real. We have to recognize that and make sure we have the right tools to fight it. However, we also have to be careful, and I mentioned the false choice we are being asked to make between public safety and civil liberties. People in Quebec had first-hand experience with that in the past. I am talking about the October crisis in the 1970s when Mr. Trudeau's Liberal government passed the War Measures Act. The NDP was the only party that opposed the War Measures Act at that time, the only party that stood up for the rights and civil liberties of Canadians. I am proud to see that we are doing that again today.

We can take concrete measures to combat the terrorist threat and radicalization in this country. We can start by striking a clear balance between civil liberties and public safety. The least we can do is make sure we have a completely independent civilian oversight mechanism. Our legislative approach to combatting terrorism must be more thorough, and it must be based on facts and evidence, for once.

The bill was introduced on the Friday before the week-long break for our constituency work. As the official opposition, we took the time to meet with experts in the field and with people who will be directly affected by the measures in Bill C-51. We also consulted with people who read criminal law very well and have a good understanding of the impact this bill could have. I could give many examples. Many civil liberties organizations, such as the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association, are very concerned about the bill's potential impact, since Bill C-51 is based entirely on ideology and not on fact.

● (1525)

First of all, these could be laws that we might never use. In the past, this place has passed public safety legislation that, for many reasons, cannot even be used by the RCMP or CSIS, for example. Furthermore, certain communities are becoming increasingly marginalized. In his speech introducing Bill C-51, the Prime Minister targeted the Muslim community directly by talking about mosques. That is unacceptable. What we should be doing here is rallying everyone to ensure that, together, we all properly understand the problem of radicalization and work hard to eradicate it.

The key here is to have an approach centred on the fight against terrorism that includes strict control over security intelligence agencies—rather than reducing oversight, which is what is happening right now under the Conservatives. It is important to mention that.

Government Orders

There is something else the members across the way have been rather quiet on, because it is nothing to brag about: so far, no funding has been announced with Bill C-51. I remember their speeches. They said that over the past few years, they increased the budget for CSIS and the RCMP. I would advise my colleagues across the way to consult the Parliamentary Budget Officer's reports. Since 2012, there have been nothing but successive budget cuts in every agency that falls under the Department of Public Safety.

The government is introducing new tools without the necessary funding to go with them. Absolutely nothing. If the members across the way took the time to talk to the people who enforce the law, such as police officers, RCMP officers and Canada Border Services Agency officers, they would see that what is happening on the ground is appalling. Police officers have told us that they were aware that people were becoming radicalized and that strange things were happening, but they did not have enough resources to do anything about it. It is all well and fine to have new tools. They are lovely to have in the toolkit, but they are all for naught without the means to use them.

This is a meaningless bill that is far too broad and complex. It does nothing to address the problem directly. What is more, it does not allocate any funding. Since 2012, all the government has done is cut public safety budgets. Funding for the Department of Public Safety was cut by about 10%. It is pretty bad for the Conservatives to say that they are doing something, when the Parliamentary Budget Officer is saying quite the opposite.

Furthermore, we currently have some very good tools to fight the terrorist threat on the ground. RCMP officers have done an incredible job. A few weeks ago, a plot was thwarted in Ottawa. I believe it was February 13. Another plot was foiled in Halifax. Those are two very fine examples that prove we currently have good tools that work. We simply have to provide the necessary appropriate and adequate resources. I am not saying that nothing should be changed and that everything we have right now is fine. However, we are on the right path. We should give our officers on the ground the resources they need.

Finally, another important approach to combat terrorism is working with communities at risk through programming and developing a national strategy to counter radicalization. There is absolutely nothing in Bill C-51 to address this problem. Discussing a national strategy for countering radicalization is absolutely necessary if we want to tackle the problem.

I have a hard time believing that the Conservative government wants to work in isolation on this. They did not hold proper consultations. I am also sad to see that a number of colleagues on the other side did not take the time to fully understand the measures in the bill. Canadians want to know what is in Bill C-51. They want us to tackle the terrorist threat. Everyone wants to work on this. I do not know a single person in the House who does not want to combat terrorism or radicalization.

What is important is to have the right tools and right resources. We need to work with people on the ground and develop a national strategy against radicalization. The Conservatives cannot work in isolation and think that what they are doing is the best option.

I see that my time is almost up. I still have much more to say. I hope that my colleagues will have many questions for me. I would be happy to respond. However, I just want to tell those watching at home not to be deceived. This bill does not strike a balance between public safety and civil liberties. The official opposition believes in rights and freedoms, and we will not stand for this.

• (1530)

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened quite carefully to the speech. I completely disagree with a whole lot of it. A lot of the things that were said were factually incorrect.

I want to go back to one of the reasons why the opposition members have claimed they cannot support the bill. They continuously talk about civil liberties. Canadians understand that civil liberties, their personal freedoms and national security, go hand in hand. The bill would ensure that they would be protected.

We talk about the bill targeting terrorism. Activities related to terrorism are not a personal freedom or a right; they are criminal activity and in fact they are acts of war.

What part of the legislation would infringe on the personal freedoms or rights of law-abiding Canadian citizens? Those members have yet to pinpoint anything, and I would like to respond to it because their argument lacks any type of merit.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the parliamentary secretary does not keep up with the work that the Parliamentary Budget Officer is doing, that she does not consult the people who work directly on the ground, that she does not realize she is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and that the Department of Public Safety's budget has been cut by 10% since 2012.

There have been serious consequences and they are evident. The Department of Public Safety reported them and the Parliamentary Budget Officer has been reporting them since 2012.

The members opposite are pretending to address the problem and are offering us a false choice between public safety and civil liberties. However, we all know how important it is to have a free country. The freer a country is, the freer and safer its people are.

I spoke to many stakeholders about the content of Bill C-51. It seems to me that the members opposite do not remember the cases of Maher Arar and Air India and the resulting reports and recommendations. Instead, the Conservatives decided to work in a vacuum. They are not working with the experts on the ground and they are not learning from their mistakes.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great pride the member stood in her place and seemed to be very proud of the fact that the New Democrats were voting against the legislation. She then equated that to the fact the NDP voted against the War Measures Act in 1970 during the October Crisis.

Government Orders

I am sure the member would be aware that the premier of Quebec and the mayor of Montreal at the time felt that it was warranted, and they approached the prime minister to ask him to invoke the War Measures Act.

Would the member clarify whether she believes all members of her caucus believe the War Measures Act was in fact wrong, even with hindsight, that it should never have been invoked even though it was requested by the premier? How does the member equate their passion for that issue with this issue we are debating today?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I told the House that I was proud to vote against the bill, but I am even prouder that we took the time to read the bill before taking a position on it. We did not follow the example of the Liberals, who gave the Conservatives a blank cheque.

I do not always agree with the Conservatives, but at least they have a position. They are not copying others or deciding to approve a bill without even reading it. That is appalling.

With regard to the very cavalier way in which the Liberals managed the October crisis in the 1970s, had we all been there, we would have all voted against that proposal because it did not make sense then and it still does not make sense today.

• (1535)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague from Alfred-Pellan 100%.

In the past, governments have suspended civil rights and liberties. In British Columbia, the police have arrested people who had not broken any laws.

[*English*]

When we suspend civil liberties, a lot can happen in our country that makes us not recognize Canada.

I want to respond to the parliamentary secretary's question. The various privacy commissioners across Canada are pointing out that the bill would violate the rights of Canadians to privacy.

Also, we have mentioned many times in this place, which seems not to be understood by any Conservative minister or parliamentary secretary who has yet to respond to me, our country has a tradition that respects people who choose to act in an unlawful way when their actions are peaceful. It is a tradition called “non-violent civil disobedience”. The bill does not distinguish between acts of non-violent civil disobedience, which by their very nature are not lawful. They are not violent or a threat to the security of Canada but are a matter of conscience.

That is what the Conservative administration does not understand, or it is deliberately misleading Canadians and fully intends to conduct surveillance and interference on people exercising that right of conscience.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her comments. She raised a number of interesting points. The crux of the matter, as she said, is the lack of balance between public safety and civil liberties.

Actually, this is not really about balance; rather, the two should go hand in hand. This kind of action is completely illogical. I am glad that she is on our side and that she said she would be voting against Bill C-51.

There is so much to say because there are so many details. I often get the impression that the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party are already campaigning on this issue. That is not what we, as parliamentarians, should be doing. To do our job as parliamentarians, we should have been given enough time to discuss this bill in the House. I highly doubt that we will have much time to discuss it in committee either. My Green Party colleague pays close attention to what happens in the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. I am reaching out to the Conservatives, and I hope they will give us time to hear from a number of witnesses and allow enough committee meetings to study this bill thoroughly.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is important to point out that a parallel can indeed be drawn between the current situation and the October crisis in 1970. In both cases, the NDP was the only party to stand up in this House to defend people's rights and liberties and defend civil liberties, unlike the other parties that were in power in 1970 or are in power now.

Fear usually elicits strong emotional reactions in people. Unfortunately, we are in a situation where the international context is full of horrors and atrocities that are raising fears among some Canadians. Right now I feel as though the Conservatives are using that fear to try to score political points, even though the election is six or seven months away, and I find that extremely unfortunate.

Can we have a rational debate on the real threat that exists? Can we get some rational, democratic responses to deal with the radicalization of our young people and answer our questions regarding public safety in order to keep all Canadians safe, without using fear as the main motivator?

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I get the same impression when I look at the content of Bill C-51 and how it was presented or when I hear the responses from across the way when we try to get more specific details about the bill.

This bill makes us feel like the election is already under way. The Liberals will have to confirm this, but I get the feeling that they looked at the polls and realized that the general public seems to support Bill C-51, so they decided they would vote in favour of it.

They are using this fear as a motive for voting in favour of a bill that has aspects that are really irrational. It is interesting because Jean Chrétien, a former Liberal prime minister, signed a letter this morning saying that civil liberties would be affected and there would be problems with the CSIS oversight mechanism.

That is the impression I get when I look at what the Conservatives and the Liberals are doing. Unfortunately, they are using fear for political gain. The NDP will not do that.

Government Orders

•(1540)

[*English*]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for York Centre.

Today I rise in the House to speak about the anti-terrorism act, 2015. Specifically, I will focus my remarks on the component that would give CSIS a mandate to disrupt threats to the security of Canada. It is abundantly clear that the international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada. Canadians are being targeted by jihadi terrorists simply because these terrorists hate our society and the values it represents.

Terrorism is not a human right. It is not a personal freedom. It is an act of war. This is why our Conservative government put forward the legislation we are speaking to today. It would protect Canadians against jihadist terrorists who seek to destroy the very principles that make Canada the best country in the world in which to live.

In recent months, we have heard much about the role of CSIS, particularly during debates in the House and how critical it is to our national security. Given this role, the Canadian public may have been surprised to learn that currently the mandate of CSIS is limited to collecting and analyzing intelligence, which it then uses to advise the government on threats to the security of Canada.

Essentially in matters of national security, CSIS has adopted the role of Canada's note takers. Do not misconstrue my comments. This is a role that the brave men and women of the service have performed admirably for the last 30 years, stifling an unknown number of attacks. However, the fact remains that CSIS does not have the lawful authority today to take action against threats to the security of Canada.

For example, while CSIS can carry out interviews to collect information from individuals, it cannot conduct interviews to deter these individuals from engaging in terrorism. This limitation creates numerous missed opportunities that could have serious, grave consequences. This legislation seeks to amend the CSIS Act to rectify this situation by providing the service with the mandate to take action to disrupt threats before they become a serious danger to Canadians.

CSIS is uniquely placed to take action in instances where other organizations cannot. For example, it has access to intelligence not available to others. It is exposed to the full spectrum of threats to the security of Canada as defined in the CSIS Act, presenting it with opportunities to intervene. Also it can operate covertly in Canada and abroad in accordance with the laws of Canada.

Under the bill, CSIS would be authorized to use an array of techniques to reduce threats to the security of Canada. In order to preserve CSIS's operational flexibility, there is no itemized list of possible threat diminishment measures in the proposed amendments. This is quite intentional, as it means we would not have to come back and update the legislation to match the rapidly evolving threats we face.

Instead, the bill requires that all measures be reasonable and proportional in the circumstances having regard to the nature of the threat, the nature of the measures, and the availability of other means. For added insurance, the bill explicitly mimics the prohibitions found in the Criminal Code, which currently apply to law enforcement.

Further, the bill proposes a rigorous judicial oversight and authorization regime. CSIS would have to request a warrant on a case-by-case basis from a judge when its actions would affect charter rights or would otherwise be contrary to Canadian law. As with the current warrant process, the judge might include in the warrant any terms and conditions he or she deemed advisable in the public interest.

To be clear, CSIS would not be acting above the law. In accordance with the CSIS Act, it is lawfully allowed to undertake these types of measures if they are authorized by a court warrant. This has not changed. Ministerial direction would also be issued to guide CSIS by helping ensure that CSIS carefully weighed the risks of the action as well as coordinated closely with other departments as necessary.

All of these threat disruption activities would be subject to independent review by the Security Intelligence Review Committee. The bill also contains specific new reporting requirements for CSIS and SIRC related to the use of measures to reduce threats.

Let me be very clear. The changes we are proposing would not turn CSIS into a secret police force, as the Green Party leader has alleged, and it would actually be far from it. CSIS would not be handed the power to make arrests or imprison individuals. It is simply not the case. It would not undertake actions that duplicate or conflict with the efforts of the broader security and intelligence community.

•(1545)

Also, as I have just said, robust judicial oversight and robust review mechanisms are in place.

What we are proposing would instead strengthen Canada's national security by allowing CSIS to act rapidly to disrupt a threat. In all of its work, as it does today, CSIS would coordinate with its national and international partners as appropriate. In this regard, it is worth noting that most of the intelligence agencies run by our western democratic allies use threat disruption as part of their regular work to protect their national security. In fact, I would note comments made by S.A. McCartan, a criminal prosecutor for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, who said:

Canada is alone amongst Western countries in not allowing its spy agencies any powers whatsoever to prevent terror. It is alone in having a spy agency still operating 30 years in the past. It's time to fix that.

The CSIS Act was first enacted 30 years ago. I agree that it is time to fix that.

Government Orders

These powers would complement CSIS's work abroad, allowing it to work more closely with our allies in addressing the complex and interconnected phenomenon of terrorist travel as well as other shared threats. It would also serve to strengthen our government's capacity to address other categories of threats that fall under the CSIS Act's definition of national security. Again, the definition of what constitutes a national security risk is defined in the CSIS Act.

Thirty years ago, CSIS was created to keep Canadians safe from a wide array of threats. Today, it is a mature, well-respected organization that has a strong track record of working within the rigours of Canadian law to undertake vital security operations that keep all Canadians safe.

In light of escalating threats like terrorist travel, and considering the complex and widespread reach of global terrorist threats, it is critical that we give CSIS this new mandate so that it can build on its current operations. As part of the anti-terrorism act, 2015, this component would allow Canada to better address the threats we face, including those from violent extremists and individuals who travel abroad for terrorist purposes.

We must move forward. We must pass this legislation to strengthen our national security. Although the opposition parties have already declared that they will oppose this, I would hope that they do come to their senses and join us in supporting this bill.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary should know that we are supporting the bill, but we are very hopeful that Parliament will be allowed to work. There are a lot of clauses in the bill around which there are questions, on which we need expert testimony, and on which we need legal advice.

Could the parliamentary secretary assure us that the amendments will indeed be allowed?

She went on at length about judicial oversight. However, anybody who is watching this debate knows that judicial oversight is not enough.

Judicial oversight is between the judge and CSIS, and there might be a special advocate at times protecting the public interest, which might be different every time, but CSIS is arguing why it needs the warrant. Too many mistakes have happened in the past, and Judge Mosley, on December 20, 2013, came down with a decision. He said that CSIS breached its duty of candour to the court by not disclosing information that was relevant to the exercise to the jurisdiction by the court:

...the Court...determined that the execution of the type of warrants at issue in Canada has been accompanied by requests made by CSEC, on behalf of CSIS, to foreign agencies...for the interception of the telecommunications of Canadian persons abroad.

The court concluded that this is "not authorized under any warrant issued by CSIS..."

The point is that there is pressure on the judges. What we need in addition to that is parliamentary oversight. Will the parliament secretary support that?

● (1550)

Ms. Roxanne James: Mr. Speaker, on any activities that CSIS undertakes that requires a warrant, obviously it has to be able to prove what justifies the request for that warrant.

I certainly hope that the member opposite is not passing judgement or questioning the ability of our current judges in the judicial system to make those appropriate decisions in such cases. I mean, these are judges who have been making these types of decisions ever since warrants were invented. Obviously, warrants are integral to any type of investigation.

With respect to oversight, there are a number of measures in this bill. In fact, there would be increased reporting requirements by CSIS to SIRC. SIRC would have to report back to Parliament. It would include the number of warrants, how these warrants were used, and whether they were successful in the endeavours they pursued.

[Translation]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

Under this bill, CSIS will now decide whether one of its planned operations could violate the law or the charter, which would oblige it to request a warrant from a judge.

However, the Federal Court has previously accused CSIS of not providing all the information required when requesting a warrant.

I would like to know what exact measures will be included in the bill to ensure that CSIS co-operates and provides all of the information so that this does not happen again.

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James: Mr. Speaker, my last answer to the member of the Liberal Party was quite clear on how this process would work.

To be honest, I find the NDP has been so naive in dealing with the threat of terrorism. Those members talk about this legislation instilling fear into Canadians.

Just last week another incident happened in Copenhagen. There were recent attacks in Paris and Australia and right here in Ottawa in this Parliament building on October 22.

This legislation is required to protect our security and to protect Canadians. It is essential. These are common sense measures. I am not surprised that the NDP is opposing the bill. That party has opposed essentially absolutely everything we have brought forward to protect Canadians from terrorism, including making it illegal to travel overseas to engage in terrorist acts and stripping citizenship from convicted terrorists. As well, they voted against standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies in the fight against global terrorism.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are a country that holds a strong belief in equality, human rights, and the rule of law. Therefore, I would like to begin my comments today by making a statement that may seem obvious but that some in this House would deem to be controversial. The international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada. Canadians are being targeted by jihadi terrorists simply because these terrorists hate our society and the values we represent.

That is why our Conservative government has put forward the bill we are talking about today. It is a bill that would protect Canadians from jihadi terrorists who seek to destroy the very principles that make Canada the best country in the world in which to live.

Be it the brutal and merciless attacks on Canadian soil in October or abroad in Sydney, Paris, and Copenhagen in recent weeks, terrorism attacks core values and what we as Canadians hold dear: our freedoms and our democracy. As the Prime Minister indicated following the violent attacks, “We will not be intimidated”. It is therefore essential that we provide those entrusted to investigate, analyze, and respond to terrorism with all the necessary tools to degrade and destroy threats to our national security in whatever form they may take. This is exactly what the anti-terrorism act, 2015 would do.

I would like to spend my time discussing the parts of this bill that have been the subject of considerable interest; namely, the amendments that would strengthen the terrorism recognizance with conditions and the terrorism peace bond provisions.

The ability to prevent terrorism before it happens is critically important in our overall approach to responding to terrorism at home and abroad. Preventative arrest provisions, as they are more commonly known, do just that. They are rapid response tools that can be sought even where there has been no criminal charge and no prior convictions, enabling a judge to impose any conditions.

The anti-terrorism act, 2015 would reduce the red-tape burden required to obtain a recognizance with conditions. Under the current law, a peace officer must believe, on reasonable grounds, “that a terrorist activity will be carried out”. That is an incredibly high threshold. The bill would change this and instead require that a peace officer believe that a terrorism offence “may be carried out”. This is far more reasonable. It would also replace the additional requirement that a police officer suspect, on reasonable grounds, that the recognizance is “necessary to prevent the carrying out of the terrorist activity” with a requirement that the police officer suspect on reasonable grounds that the recognizance “is likely to prevent the carrying out of the terrorist activity”.

Other important changes to the terrorism recognizance are contained in this bill. Currently, a person may be detained under these provisions for a maximum of three days. The bill would increase the maximum period of detention to seven days. I support this change, because we need to ensure that Canadians are safe from terrorist activity. I also support this change because the law would also ensure that the constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms of those detained would be fully respected by requiring police to go before a judge after the first 24 hours, and generally every 48 hours thereafter, to justify the need for continued detention.

It is important to understand how these provisions work. Under the current law, if a police officer has arrested someone without a warrant, he or she is required to bring that person before a judge within 24 hours. Once brought before the judge, the person can be ordered detained for up to an additional 48 hours if justified on various grounds, including where it is necessary to protect the safety of the public.

The anti-terrorism act, 2015 would not change this process but would allow for detention beyond this three-day period only where the continued detention remained necessary on various grounds, such as protecting the public, and where there was evidence to show that the investigation was being conducted diligently and expeditiously. In other words, there would be ongoing and meaningful judicial oversight concerning the detention of a person under these powers.

● (1555)

The proposed reforms would also allow young persons to be subject to recognizance with conditions under the provisions of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, as is currently the case for terrorism peace bonds.

I would like to discuss the improvements to the existing terrorism peace bond contained in the anti-terrorism act, 2015. The proposed changes would make this tool easier to obtain. The evidence would have to demonstrate that a person believed, on reasonable grounds, that another person “may commit” a terrorism offence, instead of the current “will commit” a terrorism offence requirement.

For both the terrorism recognizance with conditions and the peace bond, the bill would authorize a court to require sureties from a defendant. A surety is someone who agrees to take responsibility for ensuring that a person subject to the court order complies with the conditions imposed.

The bill would also require a judge to specifically consider whether geographical restrictions and temporary passport surrender conditions should be imposed to prevent the carrying out of a terrorist activity or the commission of a terrorism offence.

In situations where an individual subject to a peace bond has been previously found guilty of a terrorism offence, a judge would have the authority to order the duration of the peace bond to be up to five years, up from the current limit of two years.

Finally, the bill would increase the maximum sentence of imprisonment for a breach of these court orders in relation to the recognizance with conditions and terrorism peace bonds from two years to four years.

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Now, it is important to note that existing safeguards on the use of these preventative tools are maintained in Bill C-51. First, before police can use these provisions, they will be required to obtain the consent of the Attorney General, meaning that a full review of the facts will occur to ensure that there are justifiable grounds to proceed. Second, although a police officer may arrest and detain someone under these provisions without having first obtained the Attorney General's consent, they can only do so in exigent circumstances where the grounds for laying an information exist but it would be impracticable to lay the information, for example, because it is necessary to arrest someone immediately due to a concern that terrorist activity will occur unless the person is arrested.

Third, the provisions require judicial oversight. Fourth, the use of the recognizance will continue to be the subject of annual reports to Parliament by the Attorney General of Canada and the Minister of Public Safety. Parliament will, for example, be informed of how many applications were brought, how many detentions occurred, and whether the new additional periods of detention were sought and obtained. Finally, the recognizance with conditions will still have to be brought before Parliament for mandatory review and will still be subject to a sunset clause, as required by the Combating Terrorism Act of 2013.

Before concluding, it is worth noting that the proposed enhancements to our terrorism prevention tools are consistent with similar tools in place in like-minded jurisdictions. For example, the United Kingdom has used similar measures to protect the public by imposing conditions on people who have been determined to pose a threat to the safety of the community. Australia uses control orders to prevent terrorist acts from occurring and that enable the imposition of conditions on individuals.

I think this is important, because it shows that countries with strong democratic traditions and institutions and that respect the rule of law have also recognized that they can take measures that are firm in their response to terrorism and fair in their approach, respecting the rights of those subject to these preventative tools.

We have a strong set of anti-terrorism laws. Proposals in this bill would enhance these laws to enable law enforcement to intervene earlier and more effectively in terrorist investigations.

If there is a moment when I believe we can stand together, it is now. Initiatives such as those put forth in Bill C-51 send a clear message to the world that Canada is and remains a leader in implementing measures that contribute to global security and in a way that respects the rights, freedoms, and values that define our country.

• (1600)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have quite a specific question for the member.

On page 44 of the bill, there is a proposed change to be made to the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act. It says that if there is propaganda on a computer, and it is made available for the public, this information can be deleted.

I am wondering if the member can tell me if this means, for example, that if someone from Burnaby decides to put on his or her computer website that the person is going to cross a protest line at a

pipeline protest, CSIS can now go in and delete that from that person's computer?

Mr. Mark Adler: Mr. Speaker, it was Winston Churchill who once said that "an appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last".

What this bill would do is enhance and give the right tools and proper equipment to our law enforcement officials so that they can keep Canadians safe.

In 1981, the McDonald Commission reported on the wrongdoing of the RCMP at the time. CSIS was created three years later, in 1984. CSIS was created with the sole purpose of investigating foreign intelligence agencies operating in Canada. Times have changed, and our security intelligence services need to change with them. We now have new threats.

If the member remembers last October, we had a terrorist incident right here in our own Parliament. We had another terrorist incident in Quebec. There have been terrorist attacks recently in Copenhagen and Paris. Our law enforcement officials need the proper tools with which to conduct the proper investigations to keep us safe.

The opposition always asks for specific incidents. Our law enforcement officers never get saves, like in baseball. We do not hear about what they stop, but we do hear about what actually gets through. Our job here is to make sure that our law enforcement officials can continue to make those saves so that we do not ever have to hear about another terrorist incident happening in Canada or anywhere else in the world.

• (1605)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member for York Centre talk about how the powers in this are similar to those in the U.K., and that is true. In fact, in some instances, they do not go as far. However, in the U.K., as in the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand, there is strong parliamentary oversight. I could quote from the British document all the areas that are surveilled, but I will leave that for a later time. If we are going to compare this bill to the U.K., then let us compare it in all of its aspects. The U.K. has strong parliamentary oversight. I ask the member if he would agree that we need that strong parliamentary oversight.

Second, he talked about sunset clauses in the bill and that they would continue. That is true. Some would, but the new sections of the bill would not sunset. Proposed sections 83.221, 83.222, and 83.223 would not be sunsetted, and they ought to be.

If the member is talking about how he agrees with the sunset clauses continuing, will he agree to amendments to sunset those other clauses that are new and would not be covered?

Mr. Mark Adler: Mr. Speaker, coming from the leaning tower of appeasement party over there, I am a little taken aback. Here is a party that first of all said that it did not support our mission in Iraq, claiming that it supported the troops but not the mission. That is reminiscent of conscription if necessary but not necessarily conscription. It seems that the Liberal Party is very adept at that.

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I must say, however, that our fight against terrorism is multi-faceted, and it must evolve with the times. Terrorism is the number one threat to our country right now, and our responsibility as legislators is to the people of Canada who have sent here. They have sent us here to keep them safe, first and foremost. We are committed to that. We do not waver.

We know exactly what our job is here. It is to keep the people of Canada safe, and we will not—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The member has exceeded his time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Churchill.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House to join my colleagues in the NDP who have expressed our opposition to Bill C-51. We have signalled to Canadians that what is most important for us is standing up to fear and standing up for the ability to defend our rights.

I also stand in the House to share a perspective as the aboriginal affairs critic for the NDP, to speak out on the potentially harmful and even devastating impact this piece of legislation would have on indigenous activists and communities.

Bill C-51 seeks to criminalize dissent. As we know, indigenous peoples—first nations, Métis, Inuit, or indigenous peoples in general—have often been at the forefront in fighting for what is important to them and, in many ways, what is important to all of us. These activists, these leaders, these members of their communities are not terrorists and do not pose a danger to the lives of anyone. These individuals have taken it upon themselves to stand to protect their inherent land rights, the welfare of their people, and the environmental integrity of this planet. These are the indigenous activists who work across this country seeking justice, and they are all deeply concerned by the threat posed by Bill C-51.

I should note at this point that I will be sharing my time with the member for Halifax.

The problem with this legislation is very simple. It lumps legitimate dissent together with terrorism. Indigenous peoples have a right to seek environmental and social justice through protest, communication, and activism. This bill would call that work criminal. It would call that work terrorism.

I have taken it upon myself to reach out to a number of indigenous community leaders across the country and have gathered some of their comments in this speech. Theirs is a perspective that must be heard, as we stand on the brink of passing into law a bill that would greatly curtail all of our rights and freedoms. The Conservative government is seeking to use its powers to control and censor the voices it does not want to hear.

Pam Palmater, the Mi'kmaq lawyer and Idle No More activist, gave me permission to share her thoughts. She said:

As treaty and territorial allies, First Nations and Canadians face a formidable foe and threat to our collective futures. Idle No More raised awareness about the break down in democracy in general and human and Aboriginal rights specifically. Hundreds of thousands of people across Canada rose up against Bill C-45—the large, unconstitutional omnibus bill pushed through Parliament without debate which threatened our lakes and rivers. This time, the threat is personal—any one of us could go to jail for thinking or voicing our opinions. All of the rights, freedoms and liberties upon which Canadian democracy rests will be suspended with Bill C-51.

This bill creates what has been described as Harper's "Secret Police force" with terrifyingly expanded powers.

Ms. Palmater is not wrong. This 63-page omnibus bill includes measures that would give increased powers to CSIS not only to spy on citizens who it believes pose a threat but also give it the right to disrupt their activities whenever it deems necessary. CSIS may do this without a warrant or any checks or balances.

Under Bill C-51, no one will have oversight over the will and whims of Canada's spy agency. Without calling into question the ethics or integrity of those people who work at CSIS, I can say as a citizen that I am uncomfortable in principle and in practice with any one government body having this kind of unchecked control.

Upon until now CSIS has been an intelligence gathering agency. This bill would give it powers to act as a quasi law enforcement agency. The Prime Minister is in actuality creating a special secret police force in Canada, and these secret police will be able to surveil and target anyone they want.

● (1610)

Indigenous and environmental activists are afraid about what that could mean when they organize to protest a pipeline, when they communicate among themselves to reclaim territory that is theirs, and when they speak out in defence against the government in any way, which is their right to do.

Clayton Thomas-Muller, a renowned activist, wrote to me today about the work he does:

Our movements are about justice. To criminalize Indigenous dissent, then, is to repress Indigenous rights in Canada, and our responsibilities to protect the land. We are transparent, open, base-driven movements that take a non-violent, peaceful direct action approach.... The state is criminalizing Indigenous peoples who are acting within their right to exercise jurisdiction over their lands. This is an abuse of democracy. It is clearly about providing a right-of-way for the mining and energy sector.

On the front lines of much environmental activism are the first nations of the northwest coast in British Columbia. Many nations have made it their responsibility to oppose the Enbridge pipeline and other projects they see as grave threats to their lands, their fish, and their sovereignty. These people have already been targeted and insulted by the government. They have been called dangerous radicals by the Minister of Natural Resources.

Are these the dangerous people that CSIS will exert its new powers over? Will these people be spied on, arrested, and detained for unacceptable lengths of time with no clear charges? Art Sterritt, the director of Coastal First Nations, is afraid they will be. He wrote to me this morning and said:

The pipelines and oil tankers that this legislation apparently seeks to build under the guise of fighting terrorism, strike real terror in the hearts of our communities.

An oil spill in our coastal waters would be a terrorist attack. It would kill our livelihoods and wipe out our culture. How can [the Prime Minister's] government talk about threats to Canada's territorial integrity while he threatens the territorial integrity of first nations in BC and across Canada with his government's support of risky and dangerous projects like the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline? If passed, this legislation would be a major setback in building trusting relationships between First Nations and the Government of Canada.

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As well, I spoke with Geraldine Fleure of the Yinka Dene Alliance. She said to me that she and her community already feel heavily targeted by the government for their anti-pipeline work. They are trying every day to create a safer, thriving community for their children. It's hard. They are challenged by poverty, but the fight to protect their lands and their waters is not one that they will ever give up. Bill C-51 will make it harder. It is another blow to their ability to provide a safer future for their children.

It is not enough for members of the House to rise and say to indigenous people that they do not have to worry about being treated as terrorists. First nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples have reason not to trust the government. For years, they have been targeted and harassed. No one knows this better than Ellen Gabriel of the Khanesatake Mohawk Nation in Oka. She writes:

During the 1990 Oka Crisis, Mohawk people on the front lines were attacked by police, shot at, denied their basic human rights and their right to privacy violated hundreds of times by the authorities under the direction of the Government of Canada and Quebec. Many Mohawks received notices by mail from authorities that they were being monitored and their phone lines tapped, and were not given much of an explanation except being provided with a photo copy of the criminal law code highlighting the reason their privacy was under attack: "suspected of criminal and terrorist activities...threat to public security". This continues today and has always been the case for Indigenous peoples who resist colonial laws and dispossession from their lands.

Too much is at stake with this bill for all Canadians, but it is crucial that those who will be disproportionately affected will have their chance to be heard in the House. It is crucial that those fighting for justice, for dignity for their communities, and for all of us be heard.

• (1615)

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest and I applaud my colleague's enthusiasm and passion. I am equally amazed at her imagination. I was not aware that Bill C-51 was attacking fish, but I guess I have to read it more closely.

My colleague has read so much into this bill, it is truly hard to follow and truly hard to believe. As I said, I applaud her imagination. I want to talk about oversight, which she is rightly concerned about, because we should be concerned with any kind of measure like this that goes toward protecting Canadians—and the people who rely on the fish, by the way.

We talk about CSIS and what it can and cannot do; we talk about judicial oversight, which exists; and we talk about SIRC. Language is very important. It was said by a former solicitor general that SIRC does not provide oversight; it provides review. When SIRC reviews all the actions of CSIS, as it will, and comes across something that it feels has gone beyond the lines and reports that to the appropriate authorities, that now becomes oversight.

Would my hon. colleague agree, at least on that point? She says there is no oversight in this at all. Clearly, that is blatantly untrue. Would she give a little credit and say there is some oversight? Maybe there is not enough for her and maybe she does not trust the people providing the oversight, and that is fair ball, but would she at least agree that there is some attempt at oversight in this?

• (1620)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to caution the member across the aisle for deriding my commentary. If

he had been listening closely, he would have heard that many of the words I spoke in the House are the words of some of the strongest activists in this country, the words of Pam Palmetier, Clayton Thomas-Muller, the representatives of the Yinka Dene Alliance, and Ellen Gabriel. These are people who are known to first nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. These are people who are known to Canadians. Therefore, I do not take it lightly when I share their words and beliefs.

As I have pointed out, these people have seen firsthand how far and inappropriate the reach of the government and its arms have been toward them, in some cases even personally. When they say that this bill spells nothing but trouble, he and the members of his government should know well that they know what they are talking about.

I will leave it at that, with the hope that the voices of indigenous peoples will not just be heard by the members of the government but also respected and acted on by their withdrawing this horrid bill.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Churchill for her remarks. I do not know what exactly was said on the other side, but it was something along the line that she has a great imagination. These are serious concerns of serious people that need to be addressed. I agree with the member for Churchill in that respect. I know she made a great effort to get here to make this speech. I ran into her at the door when she was coming in, huffing and puffing, but she still made her remarks to the House.

I come from of an organization that has been involved in many demonstrations, the National Farmers Union. To make a political point, it dissented, it demonstrated, it put tractors on the road, and maybe stretched the line in terms of whether or not it was sometimes lawful. That word worries me in the bill, where the latter states, "For greater certainty, it does not include lawful advocacy, protest, dissent and artistic expression". Liberals will be asking that this word be taken out.

From the perspective of the member for Churchill, if that word were removed from the bill, would it make a difference or would she still have a lot of concern? I know there have to be a lot of amendments, but I would like her to answer on that particular point.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I will begin by saying that I am proud to be part of the only recognized party in the House that is firmly against Bill C-51. I heard from indigenous activists over the last few days that they are appreciative of the kind of solidarity that New Democrats are showing with them.

This bill is deeply flawed. I will quote the leader of my party in saying that it is "...dangerously vague, and likely ineffective". All parliamentarians should take a second look, and I especially invite my colleagues in the other two parties to stand with indigenous Canadians, farmers, environmental activists, and everyday Canadians and vote this bill down.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Churchill, Aboriginal Affairs.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have shared my time with the member for Churchill. I was so pleased to be in the House of Commons when she brought forth the voices of aboriginal leaders speaking out against this bill. As she pointed out, we are the only recognized party in the House that is opposing this bill, and we should oppose it with everything we have, because it is a terrible bill.

I will pick up on the discussion around “unlawful”. That will be the crux of my remarks today, and very much through the lens of how this applies to aboriginal and environmental groups.

A lot hinges on that word “unlawful” in looking at activity that may undermine the security of Canada if there is an exclusion for unlawful activity. “Unlawful” does not just mean the Criminal Code of Canada; it could mean municipal permits or a wildcat strike. Therefore, this is dangerous legislation, because if there is a wildcat strike or an occupy movement—an occupation of town property, such as the camps that we saw set up—that activity, under the eyes of CSIS or the current government, could potentially undermine the security of Canada without the right municipal permit, and it could all of a sudden be scooped up into this anti-terrorism legislation. That is really the crux of my argument here today.

This is a big bill. It does require thoughtful analysis, and I have been reading through some of the analysis that has been done. These are not just words on the back of a napkin, or so we hope. Every single word here matters, so we really do need to look at the word “unlawful” and the implications it has for environmental and aboriginal groups.

There is one particular piece of writing by Craig Forcese, an associate professor of law at the University of Ottawa. He has written a book on national security law and maintains a blog where he posts updates because, as members know, our security laws are ever-changing, especially with the current government. Therefore, he posts responses as the law is evolving and has posted a very thorough analysis of Bill C-51 and the “unlawful” issue.

The particular post I was reading is called “Bill C-51: Does it Reach Protest and Civil Disobedience?” In it he looks specifically at whether the bill would allow the government to target protest and advocacy groups, and he points out that there is nothing in the bill that brands democratic protest movements as terrorists. He says we cannot reasonably make that assertion.

However, there is a lot in this bill that could wrap up democratic protest movements into the orbit of security concerns. He writes:

...under C-51, the government will be able to share internally (and potentially externally) a lot more information about things that “undermine the security of Canada”. That concept is defined extremely broadly — more broadly than any other national security concept in Canadian law. Yes, it can reach the subject matter of many democratic protest movements.

That is the end of the quote by Professor Forcese.

He talks about this exclusion stipulating that the concept of undermining the security of Canada does not apply to “lawful”

advocacy, protest, or artistic expression. As I said, this exclusion for lawful activity is really important. We can understand this exclusion a bit better when we look at our legislative history on anti-terrorism legislation and look at previous anti-terrorism pieces of legislation, because “lawful” means to be fully compliant with the law. We are not talking simply about compliance with criminal law; we are talking about full compliance with municipal and regulatory rules and labour laws, including those relating to strikes and protests.

Professor Forcese continues:

I am not making this up. This is exactly the same debate we had in 2001, with the original Antiterrorism Act. That Act introduced a definition of “terrorist activity”. For one aspect of that definition (serious interference with an essential service), there was an exclusion for “lawful” protest. Concern was expressed (widely) that this reference to “lawful” meant that wildcat strikes or protests without permits that implicated “essential services” might be branded “terrorist activity”.

And so the government dropped “lawful” as the precondition to protests.

That is the end of the quote.

• (1625)

That is important. The government actually took out the word “lawful” because of this concern. It might sound strange on its face, because one would think things should be lawful, but we go back to labour laws and municipal laws. It does not have to be criminal law.

In the old Anti-Terrorism Act in 2001, the word “lawful” was dropped because there is no real prospect that democratic protest movements would be terrorist activity and we could argue that the lawfulness distinction is not useful when looking at terrorist activity. However, what about when looking at actions that potentially undermine the security of Canada?

I am going to continue with something that Professor Forcese wrote:

Violating regulatory or municipal rules is bad. People should be fined, and possibly prosecuted. That's why we have police, and open, transparent courts, with due process and appeal rights.

But the question before Parliament now is whether peaceful democratic protest movements should be a security issue, handled covertly, when, e.g., they don't have the right municipal permits for their protests. And specifically, should such a movement fall within the ambit of the new “undermine” definition, or the expanded CSIS powers under the existing “threat” definition.

Given the experience in 2001 and the legal views expressed by the government of the day, we have to conclude that if the government continues to include the qualifier “lawful” in its exceptions, it does so with its eyes wide open. It really does mean to include, e.g., “illegal strike[s] that take as part of its form a demonstration on the streets—and this is an example that has been used by some in the trade union movement” within its “undermine the security of Canada” concept in the information sharing rules.

And it is comfortable with the idea that, if other elements of the “threat” definition are met...democratic protest movements with tactics that do not square in every way with even municipal law may properly be the subject of CSIS investigation and possibly even disruption.

Government Orders

I take no view on whether CSIS would ever have the resources or the complete lack of internal governance checks and balances to actually proceed in this manner. That is not my point. My point is this: when we craft national security law, we craft it to deter bad judgment. We do not craft it to be so sweeping and ambiguous that it must depend for its proper exercise in a democracy on perfect government judgment. Very few governments are perfect. And even if you think this one is, what about the next one?

What about the next government? More importantly, what about this one?

I read an article by journalist Shawn McCarthy in *The Globe and Mail*, who talked about the potential for this law to be used against legitimate peaceful dissenters, such as aboriginal groups and environmental groups. He quoted a public safety spokeswoman who said that Bill C-51 doesn't change the definition of what constitutes a threat to Canadian security and added that CSIS does not investigate lawful dissent.

Why is it, then, that we know through access to information requests obtained by Greenpeace that the RCMP has characterized environmental groups as the “anti-petroleum movement” and that the RCMP has labelled this movement as “a growing and violent threat to Canada's security”? It identifies a “highly organized and well-financed anti-Canada petroleum movement that consists of peaceful activists, militants and violent extremists who are opposed to society's reliance on fossil fuels”.

We go back to the overarching purpose of the bill, which is to turn our security intelligence agency essentially into a law enforcement body. We are taking the powers of the RCMP and giving them to our intelligence security agency. That is not why it was created, and if we think that the government of this day has the good judgment not to exercise or abuse this power, then we are very sorely mistaken.

• (1630)

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct a couple of things. I am not sure if members opposite were able to read through the entire bill. I know that the Leader of the Opposition was referring to issues concerning groups that may dissent against the government or issues with protesting and so forth. That is factually incorrect.

It is very clear in the bill on page 3. There has been some confusion between the CSIS amendments and amendments made to information sharing, but right on page 3, with regard to information sharing, it states: “For greater certainty, it does not include lawful advocacy, protest, dissent and artistic expression”.

When it comes to the activities that CSIS can investigate, that definition of what constitutes a threat to national security is actually in the CSIS act itself. It is not in the amendments that the hon. member might be referring to.

I have asked this question before. I would like to know exactly where in the bill the member thinks we are targeting people who may protest or have dissent. Clearly, it is indicated that such is not the case. The bill targets terrorism and—

• (1635)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. We are asking that questions be kept to one minute if at all possible.

The hon. member for Halifax.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I just stood here and gave a 10-minute speech that was the answer to that question. My entire 10 minutes were about the word “unlawful” and that exclusion, drawing on the records of the debate from 2001 when we debated this point in the House of Commons under the Anti-terrorism Act.

It is as if the question comes after the answer. Had she listened and not just been reading from talking points, my entire 10 minutes answered that question.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke extremely well and certainly enunciated an area that I am very concerned about when it comes to the issue of lawful demonstrations.

I have been part of and have viewed hundreds, if not thousands, of demonstrations on a variety of issues. Did they have permits? No, they did not, meaning that they were unlawful under the current understanding, which is why we very much, in our amendments, want the word “lawful” restricted and taken out of there.

However, does the member not recognize that there are some good things in the bill? There are the changes to the no-fly list and improvements on the powers of preventative arrests.

There are issues, and we continue to have some significant issues with the bill. We are hoping to change that with our amendments, but does the member not see any of the positives that are in the bill when it comes to protecting Canadians?

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, and it is a fair question. However, my answer is no. I do not actually see any benefits in the bill, because it is not actually a choice between our security and our rights. I think that is a false choice. The two are married hand in hand.

I look at the fact that CSIS was created out of problems with the RCMP's engagement in intelligence gathering. That intelligence gathering function was pulled out specifically so that the RCMP could do law enforcement and CSIS could do intelligence gathering.

Now we have the crossover effect happening backward. CSIS is actually getting powers that really do liken it to a law enforcement body. I do not think that is appropriate in the least.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I start, I would like to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Etobicoke Centre.

It is my distinct pleasure to stand in the House today to speak in favour of the anti-terrorism act, 2015.

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There is a real and present terrorist threat to Canada and her allies. We saw this on our own soil in late October, and we have seen it countless times around the globe in recent months. Copenhagen, Paris and Sydney were all hit by radical jihadists who had declared war on western civilization. Again and again, we see that individuals radicalized to violence can carry out deadly acts anywhere and at any time, whether it be in the heart of our busy cities or on the streets of our small communities.

The challenge facing Canada and our global allies is how to address this evolving threat in a manner that respects the rule of law, as well as the rights of freedom upon which democratic nations are built. On this, we cannot and will not compromise. There can be no freedom without security. While each nation must ultimately decide what is best for its own citizens, we must also ensure that we coordinate our efforts on the international scale.

This same rule of thumb applies to our domestic activities. We must create a seamless and robust national security system that will be both proactive and reactive, overt in some situations and covert in others. It must be a system in which all federal agencies and departments are working from the same playbook, ensuring that we close critical gaps in information sharing and that we are confronting a threat like terrorist travel from every angle possible, using every tool at our disposal.

This is the direction toward which our government has been moving for many years. As it is laid out in Canada's counterterrorism strategy, we have a comprehensive approach to countering the terrorist threat to Canada and Canadian interests, one that rests firmly on partnership and coordination with communities.

In particular, on the domestic side, we have developed a wide array of policies regulations, and legislation to help build a seamless national security system.

The bill before us is another step in this direction. The sheer breadth of this legislation and the number of departments and agencies that it would impact speak to the complex nature of national security and the need to engage partners. Although each element of the bill is distinct, when we step back and look at the overarching goal, we see how the pieces fit together to achieve one goal, which is to address the threat posed to Canada by violent extremists and terrorist travellers.

Allow me to briefly address the different elements of the bill and how they would work together to keep Canadians safe.

First, we would improve information sharing across federal departments and agencies as it relates to the issue of national security. As we have heard, there are a number of legal restrictions and ambiguities woven into the authorities of government departments and agencies which prevent or delay the sharing of information.

As an example, Citizenship and Immigration Canada currently collects immigration information and may share that information, but only as it relates specifically to immigration purposes. However, in today's environment of terrorist travelling and violent extremists, this type of information could also prove valuable for broader national security efforts.

This legislation would create a government-wide authority to share national security information with designated institutions that have a mandate or responsibilities as it relates to national security. Of course, this would be subject to robust safeguards to ensure accountability about how information is being shared.

The anti-terrorism act, 2015 also includes changes that would strengthen our passenger protect program, which was created to protect our aviation system by identifying threats to air passengers, crew, aircraft or aviation facilities. The proposed changes, among other things, will expand the scope of the program to address terrorist travellers, those individuals who do not pose a threat to a flight but who may be travelling to another country to take part in terrorist activities abroad.

The next element that I will speak about is the threat disruption. In this part of the legislation, we will build on CSIS' current work by providing it with the authority to proactively address threats at an early stage.

• (1640)

The fact is that CSIS is already working at home and abroad to collect intelligence, which it then analyzes and shares with the government. This change will add to CSIS' s mandate to allow it to capitalize on its expertise and knowledge to disrupt threats.

In carrying out its new mandate, CSIS would follow the same legal framework as it does for its current work. This means obtaining judicial or ministerial authorization before proceeding with much of these activities.

There are also proposed changes to the Division 9 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. While Division 9 proceedings are fairly rare, they are a critical tool to allow the government to use classified information to deny entry or status to non-citizens who pose a threat to our national security.

Bill C-51 would strengthen this tool in two ways. It would allow the government to appeal or seek judicial review of orders to disclose classified information during a proceeding, rather than afterwards as is presently the case. It would also clearly define in law which information would form part of a case before the court or the Immigration and Refugee Board. This includes information that is relevant to the case and that allows the non-citizen to be reasonably informed. This would enable the government to better protect classified information in immigration proceedings.

Additionally, the legislation includes elements that make changes to the Criminal Code, including making it easier for police to obtain peace bonds and recognizances; creating a new criminal offence for using the Internet to advocate or promote terrorist activity; giving courts the authority to seize terrorist propaganda materials, including removing these materials from the Internet; and ensuring that witnesses from law enforcement, security and intelligence agencies are better protected during national security proceedings and prosecutions.

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As members can see, the bill contains a number of measures that have specific elements for our national security posture. Together they work to further protect Canada from violent extremists as well as strengthen our borders to ensure individuals are not leaving or entering Canada to perform acts of terror.

While we know the opposition has a spotty record on terrorism, it is not too late for the Leader of the NDP to abandon his conspiracy theorist position that the President of the United States lied about killing Osama bin Laden. It is not too late for the Liberal public safety critic, the member for Malpeque, to own up for initially refusing to list Hezbollah as a terrorist entity.

•(1645)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As solicitor general, I named Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist entities. This kind of misinformation cannot continue. Call the member to order for that misinformation. That is absolute—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. That is not a point of order; it is a matter of debate. The member will have his turn to debate it in a few minutes.

The hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, if those members can support this legislation, perhaps Canadians will forget about their respective party's previous soft on terrorism stances.

I ask all members to join me in supporting this important legislation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague.

There is one thing I do not understand, and I hope he will be able to clarify it for me. We have already discussed anti-terrorism measures. I gave a speech on that topic shortly after I was elected, when we were reviewing the provisions of part II.1 of the Criminal Code, which deals with preventive arrests and all of the measures concerning the Combating Terrorism Act.

At the time, if the government thought that the measures it had passed were not working, why did it not, in 2013, give the agencies the resources necessary to do their job?

There are existing laws in place, and the government is giving them more powers when it has not promised any funding. How can the organizations on the ground and the law enforcement agencies use the powers that already exist without resources? What good will it do them?

[*English*]

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, that was a financial question and we clearly are dealing with this legislation.

I will tell a little story about myself. Between the 1970s and 1980s, when I lived in a different country, the Red Brigades in Italy were extremely active, probably some of my elderly colleagues would remember the Red Brigades and the Baader-Meinhof gang. They resorted to a lot of terrorist activities. They killed people. They killed the president of Italy. That was one of the elements that made

me determined to come to Canada, a very peaceful and nice country in which to live.

I support this legislation wholeheartedly because we need to prevent our people from becoming victims of terrorists.

•(1650)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, where did the member get the information from about my time as solicitor general? I was the solicitor general who named Hamas and Hezbollah as terrorist entities. I know a lot of members over there like to think otherwise. I can table a document in the House tomorrow to prove that point, if the member desires.

This is not the first time. Over a year ago, the member for Winnipeg South Centre, in a Standing Order 31, made the same comments. Two weeks ago, the member for Wetaskiwin made a personal attack against me, saying the same thing again.

The member's information is incorrect. This is an important debate. We are talking about national security in our country. Some of us are trying to balance that against civil liberties. Some of us have been in the position of some of those people in the front row on the other side.

Why do you lower your honour by using those talking points that are—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the hon. member for Malpeque to address his questions to the Chair, not to other members.

The hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East has about a minute.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for the member for Malpeque. He is very active in the House.

I just wanted to express my deep concern. If we do not adopt this legislation, we will expose Canadians to terrorist attacks and we will lose lives.

This legislation is very important for the reasons I spoke about before. We must be proactive in this area. We need to confront terrorists. It is not only the terrorists from the Middle East, there are also other terrorist activities, such as the Red Brigades, Marxist-Leninists, Maoists and the Baader-Meinhof gang.

It is very important for me that the legislation passes. I invite the member to support it. There might be inaccuracies and so on. I was not in the House. I encourage the member to vote for the legislation.

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also share the sentiment that my hon. friend from Malpeque is an honourable man, and I have enjoyed serving with him in the House.

Thomas Jefferson once said, "In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock", and that is this government. Those who swim with style are across the aisle in the New Democratic Party. Although they are delightful people, they are naive, and in their naivety they risk the security of this nation, and this is something that concerns us all. This is an important debate. This is something that is critical to our country at this point in history, right now.

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As my hon. friend just said in his speech a moment ago, his experience in Eastern Europe is why he came to Canada, seeing the Red Brigades, the Baader-Meinhof gang, and others at those times. Those were very poignant times and very poignant moments in the history of the world in terms of terrorism. It was a portent of things to come. We saw the terrorism of the Middle East grow and develop into what is now ISIL. This group has not just threatened Canada. This group has declared war on Canada and on the entire world. It is incredibly important that we deal with this right now.

These security threats that are facing our country and the world right now are serious. The world has changed. We have to wake up to this. This government is addressing that right now, head on, because we have a responsibility to defend each and every Canadian in this country. That is our duty and our responsibility, and that is what we are doing right here. We are not going to allow obfuscation to stand in the way, nor just a simple lack of understanding of what security actually means, not only in Canada but within our security environment in the world, because the world has become much more dangerous, whether we like it or not. The end of the Cold War provided us with a peace dividend that we thought was going to last. It did not, and now we have Vladimir Putin threatening the world, threatening NATO, and threatening his neighbours as well. These are serious challenges that we face in this country, and this is something on which we have to work hard.

I would like to point out that the party opposite is on the wrong side of history. Eighty-two per cent of Canadians support what this government is doing, and out of that 82%, 36% do not think we have gone far enough. This government is going to protect Canadians.

It is clear from recent events, be they attacks in Copenhagen, Paris, Sydney, or even right here in Canada, that the international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada and our allies. There is ample evidence. It is all over the media. It is all over YouTube. It is all over the Internet. If we are blind to these things, that just makes us dangerous to the security of our country. We cannot afford to turn a blind eye to this. We must be absolutely vigilant in the security of Canada.

They have done this for no other reason than that we support freedom, we support democracy, we support the rule of law. These are the concepts that they simply despise, these barbaric terrorists who make up the so-called Islamic State, or Daesh. There is no rhyme or reason to it. There is no logic to it. They just do not like our way of life and they do not like our values. It is too bad, because we are going to combat them at every turn. We are going to defend Canadian values and Canadian democracy at every turn.

On October 23, 2014, the Prime Minister said, “Canada will never yield to terrorism, and neither will this House of Commons—we carry on.”

The introduction of the anti-terrorism act, 2015, gives voice to this resolve. The anti-terrorism act, 2015, would create a new criminal offence for promoting or advocating the commission of terrorism offences in general and is punishable by a maximum of five years imprisonment.

Terrorism strikes to the very core of our democratic institutions and our traditions. It undermines our sense of security, places our

critical infrastructure at risk, and seeks to intimidate us so that we change our way of living. That is never going to happen.

When people encourage others to engage in terrorism, they harm our quality of life or infringe upon the freedom of all Canadians to live in a peaceful, open, and tolerant society guided by the respect of the rule of law. In short, they have committed an offence against all Canadians, and this is deserving of serious punishment.

● (1655)

Protecting Canadians is absolutely paramount, but security of this nation is also integral to our economy. Without security, the economy is at risk, and we must absolutely protect all Canadians. The concepts of advocacy and promotion are familiar to criminal law. For example, they are both used in the offence of advocating genocide. The word “promotes” is found in the hate crime provision. As well, the proposed offence would include the terms of “communicating” and “statements”, which are also familiar to Canadian criminal law and currently used and defined in hate propaganda provisions.

Some have questioned why the offence is not limited to communicating statements made in public similar to the public incitement of hatred offences. The proposed new offence is more akin to the other counselling offences that presently exist in the Criminal Code. Counselling offences are made out, regardless of whether their counselling occurs publicly or privately, because people are liable for counselling others to commit crime. Section 83.21 makes it an offence to instruct others to commit an activity for the benefit of a terrorist group. Section 83.22 makes it an offence to instruct others to carry out a terrorist activity. It is also an offence under section 464 to counsel someone to commit a crime, even where the offence is counselled and not committed.

In all these contexts, “counsel”, like the actions of advocacy or promotion, means active inducement or encouragement to commit a specific offence regardless of whether the offence counselled was or was not committed. However, it is not an offence to advocate or promote the commission of terrorism offences generally. In other words, one can be held criminally responsible for actively encouraging or inducing commission of specific terrorism offences, but one could escape criminal sanction for actively encouraging terrorism offences in general because there is insufficient detail that links the advocating or promoting to a specific terrorism offence.

In practical terms, this means that our current criminal law may not address a situation where someone encourages another person to carry out attacks on Canada, without reference to some specific activity. It is worth noting here that this is exactly what occurred in the case of the barbaric terrorist who killed Corporal Cirillo and attacked this very building. As the *National Post* reported, prior to committing these senseless acts, he had access to Internet sites that called for attacks on Canada and to “fulfill your duty of jihad in Canada”.

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Such a call for attacks on Canada could mean any number of things. It could mean urging someone to engage in acts of violence against persons or against our public infrastructure. It could mean attacks against Canadian financial or security institutions. The problem is that we do not know for sure because this is a general call to attack without sufficient detail. This makes it extremely difficult for the police to collect the evidence necessary to lay a charge under existing laws because there is no link to any specific terrorism offence. I therefore strongly support the objective of the proposed new offence, which would bring clarity to the law and address an issue that raises significant public safety concerns.

Some have said that this proposal would violate the freedom of expression. However, I do not share that view. Advocating for jihadi terrorism where Canadians are killed en masse is not a human right; it is an act of war. Canada is not alone in dealing with the scourge of terrorism promotion. We have seen this all around the world. The United Kingdom enacted a glorification of terrorism provision in 2006. France has an offence for l'apologie du terrorisme.

Je suis Charlie, Mr. Speaker.

Australia has already enacted that offence, in a way somewhat similar to the legislation before us today.

Terrorist propaganda would be defined to include material that advocates or promotes terrorism offences in general. This takedown power would not depend on a prior conviction for this offence. Terrorist propaganda is an important tool that terrorists use to brainwash individuals into joining their barbaric cause. Information operations is a potent weapon.

I call on members of the NDP and Liberal Party to put aside their previous objections to tough on terror laws, like the combatting terrorism act, and support this important legislation—like most Canadians, 82%, who are supporting it.

I close by saying that we are a society based on openness, tolerance, and respect for the rule of law. Those who advocate terrorism undermine our values and put all Canadians at risk, and this government will not stand for it.

● (1700)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech of my colleague across the way with great interest.

As we know, there is a brand new oil pipeline slated to be built through my riding of Burnaby—Douglas by the Kinder Morgan company. The government on that side of the House will stop at nothing to push this pipeline through, the Liberals are also supporting it, and everybody in Burnaby is dead set against it. In fact, the mayor of Burnaby, Derek Corrigan, said he would lie down in front of bulldozers to stop this pipeline.

I am wondering if the member can help me. That seems to be something that could be construed as a threat to our economic development in Canada, which would be covered by this act. Would Mayor Derek Corrigan of Burnaby be considered a terrorist under this act, and with the new powers being given to CSIS, would it then be allowed to disrupt the mayor's activity and anybody else's in the city of Burnaby? As members know, there were 126 people arrested

there who were trying to stop this pipeline. Grand Chief Stewart Phillip crossed the exclusion zone in the protest area. Would this new bill have any impact on that, and would the mayor of Burnaby be a terrorist?

Mr. Ted Opitz: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his example. I hesitate to use this word, but it sounds somewhat bizarre to me, because Canadians would not be targeted under this act.

For example, working with his scenario, if there were any charter implications in the surveillance of any individual for any act of terrorism, regardless of the type of example, and it did not pass muster with a judge, a warrant would never be issued. That is another level of oversight. Judges would not allow this sort of thing to happen if charter rights were violated in any way, shape, or form. However, none of that would apply to that scenario, because Canadians have the right to express themselves, and that is simply what category it would be under.

● (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reinforce that there is a need for legislation to deal with potential terrorist threats. We know that because we have been in constant consultations and connecting with Canadians to get a sense of what type of legislation they would like.

The Liberal Party has been very clear that it supports the legislation, albeit with some very serious concerns. We are calling on the government, for example, to recognize the need for a parliamentary oversight committee. It is not that much to ask for, when we are talking about protecting the rights of individuals here in Canada. When we think of the other countries that are part of the Five Eyes, such as England, the United States, and Australia, they all have it. It is not that much to ask, in order to provide assurances.

New Democrats are saying they absolutely do not recognize any benefit to this legislation, which is unfortunate, but at least there is some value to allowing some amendments. Will the member give his personal assurance that the government will accept worthy amendments in making this legislation stronger?

Mr. Ted Opitz: Mr. Speaker, the oversight that is in place right now is sufficient, strong, and robust, because as was mentioned earlier, there is a review done, but if inconsistencies are identified, they get reported and then something is done about it.

Within this bill, the ability for government departments to speak to each other, collaborate, and harmonize information is another form of oversight in being able to manage the information, so the left hand knows exactly what the right hand is doing. As I said earlier, it is a charter issue. If CSIS, for example, were trying to watch over an individual and its request for a warrant did not pass charter muster, a warrant would never be issued. That, again, is another judicial level of oversight.

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Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am most pleased to speak today to Bill C-51, the anti-terrorism act, 2015. It is an important bill and all sides have expressed strong views about it. We saw that in the lead-off speeches yesterday and have seen it in some of the discussions here today.

The bill should not, and I underline this, become a wildly partisan debate. Let us show Canadians that in the House, the 300-plus of us who are here, we can make this a better bill. The government does not have all the answers, but collectively we can produce a better bill. I ask the government to allow amendments to improve the bill.

This is an extremely serious matter. It does indeed affect all Canadians. We have a responsibility as parliamentarians to find the proper balance between national security and civil liberties and freedom of expression.

In my remarks today I do not want to get into all the technicalities of the bill, the unlawful versus the lawful distinction, et cetera, but to focus on two key areas: one, process; and two, oversight, which is extremely important. The last speaker said there is oversight. There is not oversight in this bill and the Conservatives should know that.

I will start with a statement by the leader of the Liberal Party yesterday:

...keeping Canadians safe in a manner that is consistent with Canadian values is our most sombre responsibility as legislators and community leaders. To ensure that we never lose sight of our Canadian values and never forget who we are, we should always aim to have both the security of Canadians and the protection of their rights and freedoms in mind when we set out to combat those threats.

The question is, how do we do that? How do we find that balance? We can do that, certainly by allowing witnesses from a strong cross-section of Canadian society to be heard, and when they speak at committee, we all have to listen.

The government must be prepared to accept amendments based on legal expertise, based on human concerns, and based on evidence-based testimony. I will in a moment outline some of those concerns, just to touch base with the concerns expressed in that area by individuals and groups and to make the point why they must be heard.

May I also say in fairness to the cabinet that I and a number of colleagues in this corner in the Liberal caucus understand the pressures that one is subject to when looking at an intelligence briefing in the morning about a terrorist threat. We understand the pressure that pushes government to give security and police agencies greater power and authority to challenge those threats.

I hope those threat assessments coming to the government are brutally honest, telling the facts as they are and are not exaggerated. I was not impressed, to be quite honest, by the Prime Minister's speech in Richmond Hill, where I do think he went over the top in terms of the threat to Canadian society. However, only those who have those assessments would really know what that threat is.

I can remember in my own caucus, as my colleagues here with me can recall, and certainly the member for Mount Royal, the strenuous debate we had and how fortunate we were to have that both there and within Canadian society and in committee when we brought in the Anti-terrorism Act of 2001 and expanded on it later.

●(1710)

However, because of that debate we put in sunset clauses to ensure that certain authorities granted to the police and CSIS would cease to exist at a certain point in time. We put in place a mandatory statutory review so that this chamber and the committee could review the good, the bad, and the ugly of that legislation at a certain period in time.

We do not see any of that in Bill C-51. Hopefully, amendments can be made that will draw in those points. However, in order to have amendments, the process has to change. Let us not fool anyone here. We all know what happens at committees. I talked about it earlier today. The parliamentary secretary sits fairly near to the chair of the committee on the government side. Government members are lined up in a row. Over against the back wall is the staff for the government side. Sitting among them is the staff for the whip's office. In there too is the staff for the PMO. Mike Duffy called them "The boys in short pants". Well, they are both boys and girls because I have seen them, women and men. It is as if that guy or gal against the back wall is pulling the string of the parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Randy Hoback: You want to be serious, so be serious.

Hon. Wayne Easter: I am serious, Mr. Speaker, and the member knows that is what happens. It happens at my committee. Members follow that direction. They are members in their own right; they can stand on their own two feet. What I am saying is that the process has to change if we are going to make this legislation good legislation. I ask members to really look at this issue seriously and not to take direction in that fashion. There is concern about the civil liberties of Canadians and freedom of expression. We have to listen to those witnesses.

I want to give an example of what a couple of people I have talked to have to said, people whom we will put forward as witnesses. First, there is quite a series of articles in the press these days by two individuals, Craig Forcese and Kent Roach. They have a paper they sent us that is close to 40 pages long. They are doing a summary of the key concerns with the bill. This is what they say at the beginning of the summary:

If Bill C-51 passes, CSIS will be expressly authorized to "take measures, within or outside Canada, to reduce" very broadly defined "threats to the security of Canada". Where authorized by Federal Court warrant, these "measures" may "contravene a right or freedom guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms" or may be "contrary to other Canadian law".

It does not matter whether I agree or disagree with that statement. There is a concern expressed there that we should look at seriously. These two individuals admit it themselves. They add an additional word relevant to this in a document dealing with CSIS. They say:

We are legal academics who have been researching and writing on issues of national security law (Canadian, international and comparative) for a sum total of 26 person years (between the two of us)... We are, in other words, an occasional and minor part of the national security "accountability sector", to the extent that such a thing exists in Canada.

Government Orders

These people have a point of view. They have an expression of interest that we ought to listen to.

I also met with the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association, which also has concerns. That association was founded in 1998 by a small group of Toronto based Canadian Muslim lawyers. It has over 300 members across Canada and active chapters in Ontario and Quebec. The association states:

• (1715)

Bill C-51 is deeply flawed legislation that should not become law. Before we begin to integrate and concentrate power in government agencies on national security matters, we should first implement the remedial findings of many commissions of inquiry into the matter, most notably the Arar Inquiry.

As national security functions become more integrated it makes sense that there is a concomitant and effective counterbalance in terms of independent review and oversight. Such a body would have jurisdiction over all national security agencies and functions, including CSIS, CSEC, the RCMP and a host of other agencies (some of them currently have no oversight).

That is their opinion. They are suggesting that there needs to be much broader oversight.

These are just two examples of witnesses that we need to listen to. However, in order to make the proper amendments, accept them, and bring in those ideas, the government has to be willing to make some amendments.

To turn specifically to the issue of oversight itself, sadly, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Public Safety, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and, today, the Minister of Justice have been misinforming Canadians. Let me repeat that. Some of the highest officers and political ministers in this land have been misinforming Canadians on what exists, and what is and is not in this bill. It really is troublesome that the top political office in the land either does not know the limits of the Security Intelligence Review Committee or has not been totally forthright. I do not know which it is.

Let me turn to what the Security Intelligence Review Committee itself has said. It said that it is not an oversight body. Let me turn to its annual report for 2013-14. On page 12 of that report, in section 2, it says:

An oversight body looks on a continual basis at what is taking place inside an intelligence service and has the mandate to evaluate and guide current actions in "real time." SIRC is a review body, so unlike an oversight agency....

SIRC itself admits that it is not an oversight agency, but even if it were an oversight agency, which it is not, it is not broad enough to really review national security. If we look at schedule 3 of Bill C-51, another seven agencies have been included there. I think some of them were here before. We are adding the likes of the departments of health, national defence, and transport to SIRC, CSIS, CSEC, the RCMP, and police forces of local jurisdictions, all of which are involved in these security matters, and transferring information across departments. There needs to be a much broader oversight that even a slightly improved SIRC could handle.

I mentioned earlier the protections that we as a Liberal government put in place on the extended powers in the anti-terrorism act of 2001. There were sunset clauses in which laws would cease to exist. There was a mandatory review. In 2004, we recognized that there was still a greater need, which was for the oversight of all security agencies. As a result, an all-party committee

was proposed and put in place. It held hearings and made some recommendations, and Bill C-81 was introduced. However, it died on the order paper. I will come back to that in a moment.

• (1720)

Simply put, a previous Liberal government introduced legislation to provide for oversight by parliamentarians similar to that of our Five Eyes partners, the U.K., the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Today, in *The Globe and Mail*, four former prime ministers put an article in the paper, signed by a number of justices and former attorneys general, et cetera, entitled: "A close eye on security makes Canadians safer".

It starts by saying:

The four of us most certainly know the enormity of the responsibility of keeping Canada safe, something always front of mind for a prime minister.

They went on to say:

Yet we all also share the view that the lack of a robust and integrated accountability regime for Canada's national security agencies makes it difficult to meaningfully assess the efficacy and legality of Canada's national security activities. This poses serious problems for public safety and for human rights.

They went to say said:

Canada needs independent oversight and effective review mechanisms more than ever, as national security agencies continue to become increasingly integrated, international information sharing remains commonplace and as the powers of law enforcement and intelligence agencies continue to expand with this new legislation.

People who have been in the same position as the Prime Minister are calling on the need for oversight. Such a security oversight agency was called for by a former public safety committee while the current Prime Minister was in office. In a report dated June 2009, tabled in the House of Commons, it called for that, in recommendation 5:

The Committee recommends, once again, that Bill C-81, introduced in the 38th Parliament [by a Liberal government], An Act to Establish the National Security Committee of Parliamentarians, or a variation of it, be introduced in Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

That recommendation was supported by six members who currently sit in the House: the member for Yorkton—Melville, who chaired that committee; the member for Oxford; the member for Brant; the member for Northumberland—Quinte West; the member for Edmonton—St. Albert; and the member for Wild Rose.

The previous recommendation for Bill C-81 was supported by the current Minister of Justice and the current Minister of State for Finance. What has happened to those members since the leadership changed and we have the current Prime Minister? How come they are not still calling for oversight? They know that SIRC is not oversight. SIRC has claimed that it is not oversight. Did they lose their voice? Do they not stand by what they previously believed in, what they held hearings on? Oversight is important, and that is what we must implement in this bill, as well as a number of other amendments we will be putting forward.

Government Orders

As a final point, I will report on what the British Intelligence and Security Committee does. The members of the committee are subject to the Official Secrets Act. In their annual report, they say this:

The Committee sets its own agenda and work programme. It takes evidence from Government Ministers, the Heads of the intelligence and security Agencies, officials from the intelligence community, and other witnesses as required.

They monitor on a day-to-day basis. They keep intelligence agencies honest. They protect on two sides, as Bill C-81 would have done. It would have ensured that security agencies are doing what they are supposed to do and second, that they are not going too far in terms of infringing on civil rights and freedoms.

Let me close with a quote from my leader in yesterday's speech:

We are hopeful that the government is serious about reaching across the aisle to keep Canadians safe, while protecting our rights and our values.

• (1725)

It can be done. We need sunset clauses. We need a mandatory statutory review, and we definitely need oversight. I am sure both the NDP and Liberal Party will have many amendments to improve the bill in other ways, but the government has to reach across the aisle and allow Parliament to work.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation. It was a good presentation, and I want to compliment him on that.

The problem I have with his presentation, and a problem I have with a lot of the Liberal members' presentations, is the credibility they present them with.

When we see the NDP members present something, we know where they are. We know, for example, that on the long gun registry, they are in favour of putting our farmers and hunters in jail. They are consistent on that. When it comes to dealing with victims of crime or criminals, we know that they will defend the criminal time after time. They are consistent on that.

When I go to Liberal Party, we do not know what its members believe in. They have no policy for us to read. What they do is actively look at the polls and then decide what they are going to say and do.

It is really interesting in this situation. The member says that he wants to be taken seriously. He says that he wants to make a serious presentation. Yet when I look at the history of this member and how he has treated this Parliament, how he has treated the government, how can we look at him seriously when he makes snide remarks like "kids in short pants", when he has partisan overtones in everything he says in regard to this bill?

There is a book by Dale Carnegie called *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. If the member was truly serious and the Liberal Party was truly serious about dealing with this issue, would they not take the partisanship away and actually talk about what is in the bill? No, they cannot help themselves. They are so partisan. It is just the way they are.

When will the Liberal Party quit being so partisan and actually do what is right for Canadians and get behind this legislation?

• (1730)

Hon. Wayne Easter: My, my, Mr. Speaker, that was quite a line.

We have tried to be, and we have to be, non-partisan to a great extent, but we all have our partisan side. This place is a place of active debate and discussion, and so partisanship is going to show through. However, we are talking about national security. We are talking about doing things right.

The member and I fought over the Wheat Board. That is fine. We will put that behind us for the moment. However, I would ask the member to talk to his current House leader. When I was chair of the fisheries committee and the parliamentary secretary, the current House leader and I actually worked together. I think there were 32 motions, 20-some from government members, opposing government policy. They were all debated in public. All but one carried. Most of them were tough on the government, and when we wrote the report, with the member of the opposition, who was the critic at time, we actually sat down together and wrote the report.

This place could come back to that kind of time if the government would allow it. That is what we need to do on the bill. We need to improve it in many aspects, and we definitely need oversight. It is not there.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the hon. member, and I listened to what he was saying here today about oversight and the things that are needed to fix this bill. I have some sympathy for the member's position in a sense, because his leader has said that no matter what the member says, no matter what amendments are made or refused, he is going to vote for the bill.

I wonder why the members of the Liberal Party have abdicated their responsibility as parliamentarians such that when a measure is coming forward that they say they do not agree with, they have committed in advance to voting for it. How is that doing one's parliamentary job?

I just do not understand it. A party that seeks to be in government says, "Well, we are not in government, but we will support the government, even though we are opposed to what it is putting forth".

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I respect the member immensely. I actually quite enjoy being on a number of panels with him.

I think all we really have to do in response to that question is go to the article with the extensive number of signatures in today's *Globe and Mail*, entitled: "A close eye on security makes Canadians safer".

Four former prime ministers signed that paper. I did myself, as well as a number of others who have been justice ministers and solicitors general. It is actually calling for more oversight.

The difference between the Liberals and the NDP is that we have been in government. We have made the hard decisions on public safety. We know that there are hard decisions, when the terrorist threat is higher, on public safety issues.

Routine Proceedings

However, when we were in government, we also balanced that legislation. We believe this legislation can be balanced yet again. It can be amended to improve it. It can be balanced with sunset clauses, mandatory reviews, and oversight to make it better legislation to ensure that the security agencies really do what they ought to do.

If that does not happen, if the government does not accept our amendments, then we will put those three key amendments in our election platform, and Canadians will have the opportunity to decide on the balance of national security and civil liberties.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I realize that this issue is a critically important issue, not only for all of us in Parliament but for all Canadians. Sometimes we have to put water in our wine, as the saying goes. We are saying that the most important thing is to make sure that we are reinforcing the security of Canadians.

If we can get some amendments that will protect people's privacy and allow people to have open discussion and debate without having to be fearful of being put in jail and so on and we can get those amendments through, I think we are doing a good thing on behalf of all Canadians.

Would the hon. member like to elaborate a little more on the lawfulness issue and what that would mean to people who would like to be able to go out on a Sunday to join a protest in their neighbourhood? What could actually end up happening if we cannot get our amendments through?

• (1735)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of areas of concern in the legislation that we think go too far.

The member for York West mentioned the fact that it says in the bill:

For greater certainty, it does not include lawful advocacy, protest, dissent and artistic expression.

The word “lawful” really changes the ability of certain activist groups to show their dissent in many ways. We are going to ask the experts. We may put forward an amendment to remove that word.

In fairness to the House, I think we have between 26 and 30 amendments at the moment on technicalities in the bill. Therein lies the reason we need sound, robust parliamentary hearings with legal experts and people who work in the security field. It is to make sure that we get the bill right in all areas.

I would again emphasize the three key areas we are asking for: sunset clauses to allow certain laws to cease to exist; a statutory mandatory review, so we can look at the good, the bad, and the ugly in the bill down the road; and parliamentary oversight, as our Five Eyes partners have in their democracies around the world.

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a certain definition of a word that I am not going to repeat in the House, but it says that doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is not the best thing to do.

We adopted an anti-terrorism act in 2001 that lapsed in 2007, which was reconstructed by the Conservatives in 2013, that included most of these measures, but we never used them once, from 2001 to 2007.

What more does this bill bring than what we already have under the Combating Terrorism Act? We have not used it, not even once.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to table documents that highlight our government's ongoing commitment to provide the right conditions in Canada for industries and businesses to succeed and create new, well-paying jobs and economic growth that benefit all Canadians.

As I speak, the Prime Minister is in British Columbia announcing substantial new measures that will allow investors and facilities that liquify natural gas anywhere in Canada to recover their startup capital costs more quickly. These measures will ensure that Canadian natural gas can reach new and growing markets and make it accessible for new domestic uses.

For the benefit of parliamentarians, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, copies of the Prime Minister's announcement, the associated background, and the text of the regulations that will be enacted to implement these important job and economic growth measures.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I really do not know whether that was a legitimate point of order on the part of the whip for the Conservative Party. That seemed to me to be a ministerial statement.

If the Prime Minister is going to make that announcement, he should be making in the House of Commons. This is where the issue is debated. On the very bill that we are debating today, Bill C-51, the Prime Minister had a grand show in Richmond Hill and went over the top in terms of pointing out that there was terrorism under every rock. That announcement should have been made here, too.

There is a problem with the way the government is operating, and that is that these kinds of announcements should be made in the chamber, which is called the House of Commons, so the official critics in the opposition parties can respond to that right away. This is just getting to be propaganda and messaging on the part of the Prime Minister rather than doing our job in Parliament as we should.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I will not repeat what my colleague from Malpeque just said, but it would have been in better taste had the government simply tabled the documents without getting into all that propaganda.

It is quite unusual to interrupt a debate that is already subject to a time allocation motion to make this type of announcement.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that we had a point of order. The government whip stood on a point of order and then others tried to interrupt, calling a point of order on a point of order. Procedurally, my understanding is that a member has to ask to speak on a point of order after the person makes the point of order. I am kind of perplexed as to why members would disrespect the rules of the House and why they hate British Columbia.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Langley brings up a slightly different issue in respect of the procedures regarding points of order.

Indeed, normally when a point of order is made, in this case initially by the hon. member for Malpeque—and I will get to the other point momentarily—he is right in the sense that each is given the opportunity to briefly comment on what they see was a breach of procedure. This is what we have been doing.

We are now going to come back to the hon. Chief Government Whip to see where we are.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I think most people know I am a man of few words. I did make a ministerial statement. I had to introduce it as a point of order because I interrupted some business and I took the opportunity not to interrupt somebody midstream. I took approximately one minute of the House's time and now the other points that have been made have taken many more minutes of the House's time. My statement was completely in keeping with the rules and normal procedures of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank hon. members and the chief government whip for their interventions on this question.

Members will know that ministers of the crown may interrupt on a point of order to table documents at any given time. They have that privilege. I saw this as what the Chief Government Whip was doing. He used a few moments to explain the context of the tabling, and this is quite commonplace when ministers give the context for posing the documents to the House.

We are really at a point where all members have been heard on this question. I do not see the practice in this case being out of order.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ANTI-TERRORISM ACT, 2015

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-51, An Act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and the Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The member for Malpeque in response to the question from the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. There are certain areas, and I cannot think of the section, in the original Combating Terrorism Act extended in 2007, that have not been utilized. One should note that some of the current arrests were made under the old legislation.

Be that as it may, the point she has raised comes back to my original point. What is really needed is a lot of oversight, and we have expressed this at committee. Questions can be raised of the national security agencies. Why are they not using current laws? Is there a reason? Is there a problem on the prosecution side? Is the law not strenuous enough? Is the threshold too high?

It comes back to the whole substance around my remarks in which we would put members of both Houses on an oversight committee with expertise in the field, who could see classified information, who could ask the hard questions on a day-to-day basis of those security agencies to ensure that they were using the laws available, that they were doing their job and that they were not overextending their powers and getting into civil liberties and undermining our freedoms and values.

• (1745)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before we go to resuming debate and the hon. Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I will let him know that there are approximately 13 minutes remaining in the time allowed for government orders this afternoon, so he will not have his full 20 minutes in this case. He can judge himself accordingly in that regard. Whatever time he does not use here today will remain when the House next resumes debate on the question.

The Hon. parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and La Francophonie.

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to debate Bill C-51, the anti-terrorism act, 2015. This is obviously an important bill in this time of troubles around the world and in Canada.

The legislation before us today is comprised of five elements relating to national security. I will limit my comments to the proposed amendments to Division 9 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, or IRPA. Those amendments are in part 5 of the bill. I am also going to comment on other important aspects of the bill that define some of the threat disruption activities in which CSIS can engage. That is contained in part 4 of the bill.

[Translation]

Since we took office, our Conservative government has made the safety of Canadians a special priority.

[English]

Since being elected in 2006, we have spent a lot of effort as a government in putting a focus on keeping Canadians safe. Specifically, we have taken strong action to crack down on terrorist, both at home and abroad.

Government Orders

It is clear that the international jihadist movement is one dimension of terrorist threats that we face, and that movement has declared war on Canada and her allies, that is western liberal democracies. That is why we have taken strong action under the leadership of our Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and put forward this legislation.

We have made it a criminal offence to go overseas to engage in terrorist activities. We have created provisions to strip citizenship from those convicted of terrorist offences. We have created mechanisms for individuals to sue state sponsors of terrorism, like Iran. We have also declared war on the barbaric caliphate, or the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL.

We are doing even more today, denying access to Canadian territory to non-citizens who pose a threat to national security and maintaining the safety of Canadians among the objectives set forth in IRPA.

Generally, determining the admissibility to Canada of non-citizens is made by immigration officers, or members of the Immigration and Refugee Board, using information that can be made public.

Some non-citizens are found inadmissible on the basis of serious grounds, such as national security, human or international rights violations, and serious or organized criminality. In such cases it is sometimes necessary to rely on classified information to support a finding of inadmissibility.

The Division 9 of IRPA establishes a mechanism to allow the government to use and protect classified information in those immigration proceedings by allowing part of the proceedings to be held in a closed setting.

Under IRPA, classified information includes security or criminal intelligence information and information obtained in confidence from a source in Canada or from a foreign government that is protected from public disclosure if its release would be injurious to national security or the safety of any person.

Also, Division 9 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act includes three mechanisms that allow the use and protection of classified information during proceedings. Section 77 provides the authority as it relates to security certificates before the federal court. Section 86 provides authority as it relates to applications for non-disclosure before the Immigration and Refugee Board. Finally, section 87 provides the authority as it relates to applications for non-disclosure in the context of judicial reviews before the Federal Court.

Closed portions of the proceedings are not open to either non-citizens or their lawyers, and the public may not participate in order to protect the classified information. During the closed portions of these proceedings, a judge appointed special advocate, who is non-governmental and security cleared, represents the interest of the non-citizen.

Special advocates are empowered to cross-examine and make submissions to the court. They are empowered to challenge the government's claim that the disclosure of information would be injurious to national security or would endanger the safety of any person and, with the permission of a judge, exercise any other powers necessary to protect the interests of the non-citizen.

Division 9 cases also include open, public proceedings in which the non-citizen and his or her lawyer can participate. In this open part of the proceedings, a summary of the classified information is produced to allow the non-citizen to be reasonably informed of the allegations against him or her.

● (1750)

In some instances, Division 9 cases have involved a significant amount of classified information, some of which was not useful to the government to prove its inadmissibility allegations or to the non-citizens to be reasonably informed of the case against them. Hence, the anti-terrorism act of 2015 includes measures to clarify the classified information that would form the security certificate cases before the Federal Court and cases involving applications for non-disclosure before the Immigration and Refugee Board.

This information includes the following: it has to be relevant to the case; it has to be information on which the case is based; and it would allow the person to be reasonably informed of the case against him or her. In other words, the government would file only information and other evidence that it relies upon to make its case, and provide relevant information that is useful to the non-citizen.

Another important step we are taking in this legislation involves the appeal and judicial review of an order to publicly disclose classified information. Currently, an appeal or judicial review of a disclosure order may be available only at the end of a proceeding. Even if the government successfully seeks to have a disclosure order overturned at the end of the proceeding, it may be too late as the injury to national security may already have occurred or a person's safety may have already been endangered. While the government could seek to withdraw this information from the case to mitigate the risk of injury, this might not always be possible or doing so could dramatically weaken the case. Bill C-51 therefore seeks to allow the government to appeal or have the court review orders for public disclosure during Division 9 proceedings rather than at the end.

Let us be clear. The proposed amendments to IRPA would facilitate and reinforce Division 9 proceedings. The Division 9 regime, while exceptional, provides for a fair and constitutional process. In fact, in 2014 the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the constitutionality of Division 9 when it found the statutory framework to be consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When considering whether the government can protect information in a given case, the judge must ensure that it does not impede a fair process and that the non-citizen is reasonably informed of the case against him or her. To make this decision, the judge has the discretion to ask special advocates for submissions and to communicate with special advocates to allow them to make these submissions. When taken together, these new provisions would preserve the discretion of the judge to ensure fairness.

Ultimately, the objective of the process is the removal from Canada of non-citizens who are inadmissible on the most serious grounds and who may pose a serious threat to Canada and Canadians. Overall, these amendments would ensure that Division 9 proceedings continue to be fair, while offering more robust protections for classified information.

● (1755)

[Translation]

Our government takes the obligation to protect public safety very seriously. We are also determined to respect the rights of individuals under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and to meet our international human rights obligations.

[English]

Now I want to talk about some of the threat-disruption activities in which CSIS could engage because of changes being proposed in this bill. I will just give one example.

A young Canadian activist becomes disenchanted with Canada, and he has reviewed some YouTube videos, for example, and has listened to some influential people in his community. Individuals within his local place of worship have advised CSIS that he is planning to travel overseas to engage in terrorist activities.

Currently, in this scenario, without this piece of legislation, CSIS can investigate but cannot do anything to stop the individual from travelling. The furthest CSIS can go is to advise the RCMP that it believes the person is about to commit an offence and the RCMP could launch its own investigation, which could take several days. Under the anti-terrorism act of 2015, CSIS could actually engage with a trusted friend or relative to speak with this individual to advise against travelling for terrorist purposes. Further, CSIS officials could meet with the individual to advise him that they know what he is planning to do and what the consequences of taking further action would be. Members can see how this could lead to preventing terrorist activities and why it is important to have that.

Here is another example before I wrap up my remarks. Let us say that CSIS learns through its intelligence activities that a planned shipment of chemicals may be used in a terrorist attack on a Canadian business operating in a foreign country. The exact timing is vague or unknown. Currently, CSIS can share this information with the foreign government and other foreign partners, and a travel alert could potentially be issued by foreign affairs. That is all it could do.

With the anti-terrorism act, 2015, CSIS could actually engage in a joint operation with a foreign partner to disrupt the shipment. For example, the shipment could be rerouted so that it is not delivered into the hands of terrorists.

I will give a third example. A Canadian ally warns CSIS that foreign spies are planning to meet with a Canadian avionics firm. CSIS investigates and determines that the spies are posing as businessmen in order to purchase telemetry equipment. This dual-use technology is a civilian application in flight test programs but is also used in ballistic missile targeting. Under the current laws, as part of its investigations, CSIS can interview officials from the Canadian company to gather information and ask the CBSA to check the parts' paperwork at the time of export to determine if there are customs violations. That is all it can do.

Private Members' Business

With Bill C-51 enacted, CSIS could seek and receive a warrant to intercept the equipment and alter it so that it would not have any suitability for non-civilian applications.

These measures could save lives. These measures could disrupt terrorist organizations from terrorizing innocent populations. That is why they are very important.

I will wrap up. I have heard some exaggerations on the part of the opposition and some fabrications about what is in this bill. Canadians understand the importance of security and countering terrorist threats at home and abroad. That is why, if we talk to Canadians about what it is actually in the bill, the reasonable measures within it that put our security agency, CSIS, on par with what other security agencies do around the world, they support it. They understand the importance of these measures and the importance of giving them some additional powers that still respect the rights and freedoms we have in this country.

As the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and many of my colleagues have said, and as I have told people in my constituency of Etobicoke—Lakeshore, there is no liberty without security. Security is fundamental to our freedoms, and that is why it is important that we have strong security measures in this country.

I call on the opposition parties and members throughout the House to support this important piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. parliamentary secretary will have seven minutes remaining for his remarks when the House next returns to debate on the question.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1800)

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP) moved that Bill C-619, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to begin debate on Bill C-619, the climate change accountability act.

Private Members' Business

It is always a privilege to be here in this place, but sometimes what we have to do makes that sense much more present and inescapable. This is how it feels to me today as we begin debate on Bill C-619, because in truth we are continuing on what Jack started, the climate change accountability act. We are picking up again where Jack left off and building on his efforts to have us avert dangerous levels of global warming.

As I am sure Jack would happily acknowledge, and indeed did happily acknowledge, he too was just a torchbearer when he introduced the former and original iteration of the climate change accountability act in 2007.

Homage needs to be paid to a long lineage of Canadians who have persisted in the fight to arrest global warming. They had the foresight to know its urgency before most of us could even label it as an issue and have clung to a positive picture of our future on this planet, the possibility of living sustainably on this planet. They have hung in there not just in the face of inaction of government but in the face of the hostility of government and threats by government, most recently in the form of Bill C-51.

To paraphrase David Suzuki from some years ago, others have done their part. The scientists have done their part. The burden now shifts to the politicians to do ours.

To quote Jack Layton from his speech in this place in 2007 on his climate change accountability act, he said: "Let us take action on that burden and let us do Canadians proud by taking action". I believe that even more than when Jack spoke those words, Canadians do want us to take action.

The science has been laid out before us many times over, most recently and most comprehensively in the 2014 working group report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The findings are simple and conclusive: climate change is impacting natural and human systems on all continents and across all oceans. Glaciers continue to shrink. Permafrost continues to warm and thaw. The IPCC warns of sea levels rising by as much as half a metre by the end of the century, putting at risk tens of millions of people living in lower-level coastal cities and communities.

The IPCC warns of the changing chemistry of our oceans, of their acidification by way of increased levels of carbon, with impacts on marine ecosystems and dire consequences for global food security, as over one billion people globally rely on fish as their main source of protein.

Around the world, changing precipitation or melting snow and ice is altering water systems. It is affecting water in terms of quantity and quality. For every degree of global warming, the IPCC estimates a corresponding decrease in renewable water resources of at least 20% for significant portions of the global population.

This, in addition to extreme weather events and population growth, will have further negative impacts on food security. We are not immune here in Canada from issues of crop failure and agricultural productivity decline, according to the IPCC.

This is the path we are on. Perversely, these are the threats to our peace, to our security, to our happiness, to the reproduction of human

life and other forms of life on this planet that we are creating for ourselves.

Along this path we keep passing warning signs. Jack held up a sign, the climate change accountability act, seven years ago. It urged us to stop and provided a different way forward. It pointed to a different future. Jack, in his speech in 2007 on his version of the bill, talked about there being, "...a moment in time here that is unique in Canadian history when action can be taken".

Some might argue that that moment was lost on us as Jack's bill got caught up in the partisan machinery and machinations of this place and as the IPCC begins prudently to model global warming beyond the two-degree mark.

● (1805)

However, I am hopeful that the moment that Jack identified still lingers and that we can act with haste, and with more Canadians more certain now that perhaps we must act with haste.

Bill C-619 revises that which Jack had previously tabled, recognizing changes in the institutional context—specifically, the death of the national round table at the hands of the Conservative government—and recognizing that sub-national jurisdictions and international organizations have moved forward while this place stood still, leaving Canada open to international criticism and undermining the reputation of not just Canada but of us, of all of us as Canadians, as people always prepared to do our fair share.

Bill C-619 sets out new milestones to get us to a level of greenhouse gas emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, which is the target recognized by the scientific community as the minimum required to limit global warming to 2° Celsius and to prevent catastrophic climate change.

The bill, the only legislation in this Parliament to ever bring forward legislated emission reduction targets, would set a binding medium-term target of a 34% reduction in GHG emissions by 2025.

Bill C-619 would further require the Government of Canada to set and commit to targets for each five-year period up to 2050; to develop and publish plans to achieve these targets; to ensure that these targets are developed in compliance with the latest scientific reports and methodology of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; and to ensure that these targets closely reflect the most stringent targets set by other developed nations, effectively setting the best practices in OECD countries as our own benchmark here in Canada

Private Members' Business

With the United Nations climate change conference in Paris set for December 2015, Canada needs a serious plan to bring to that table, and this is it. This bill would bring our country back to the forefront of environmental protection and climate change mitigation, because the targets set out in Bill C-619 and the accountability process set out to support them do nothing less than commit Canada to doing its fair share to avert catastrophic global warming.

However, the climate change accountability act is not here before us just because of the moral imperative to do something to change the course we are on, but also and equally because of the opportunity it presents to us. Holding firm to these targets brings forward the opportunity to invent and invest in new ways to live and be productive on this planet.

Clearly, as an example, in light of the growing food security issues created by and hastened by climate change, there is a need to usher in transformative change in what food we grow and the way we grow it. Clearly, too, there is an opportunity to usher in transformative change in how we produce energy. According to Clean Energy Canada, a global commitment to getting to 80% below 1990 levels requires a \$44 trillion investment in clean energy.

There is a nascent clean energy industry in Canada, with 37% job growth between 2009 and 2013. More Canadians are employed in renewable energy production in Canada than in the oil sands, yet we in Canada have captured just 1% of the \$1 trillion global clean energy industry. We are being left out and left behind.

It is notable that the China-U.S. climate change pact signed last November was not just about climate change; it was also about clean energy co-operation. We have in Canada what we need to participate more fully in this industry. As the Pembina Institute put it:

Canada is well positioned to compete in the field of clean energy technology, creating jobs and economic prosperity across the country. It was recently noted that "Canada's skilled workforce, innovation clusters, research excellence and stable investment climate make it an ideal growth environment for cleantech firms."

However, the current government greets this opportunity with, as the director of Clean Energy Canada put it, "indifference".

• (1810)

While other national and sub-national governments here in Canada make the clean energy industry a priority, the federal government continues to raise the stakes for all of us on the fossil fuel economy, putting billions of dollars of public funds into subsidies for the oil and gas industry, tearing to the ground environmental regulation in a desperate effort to get Canada's oil out of Canada by whatever means possible without regard to environmental risk or social license. There are beads of sweat rolling down the collective forehead of Canadians watching this desperate gamble, watching the economic stability and the economic prospects of this country at stake in the government's desperate gamble on fossil fuels, on a brittle, unstable carbon economy.

This bill is a response to parents worried about their kids' future. It is a response, too, to young people looking for a future. There is opportunity embedded in this bill on climate change, and Canadians are looking for such opportunity after successive failures by Liberal and Conservative governments to deal with climate change and chart a course into and through this century.

As the urban affairs critic and infrastructure critic for our NDP caucus, I want to close with a word about cities, about the possibilities for our cities that flow from this bill and, as Jack put it, about the moment we are in.

All around the world it is recognized that in cities lie our best opportunity for averting global warming. Cities are responsible for the end-use of three-quarters of our fossil fuels and, consequently, a commensurate amount of our greenhouse gas emissions.

Looking out from here, the story could get worse as the global and historic trend toward urbanization will continue through this century. However, looking out from here, one can also begin to imagine a different way of living on this planet and our potential to defeat this problem.

China and the U.S. have recognized that. Their climate change and clean energy pact includes a climate-smart/low-carbon cities initiative. The joint announcement of the pact says:

Under the initiative, the two countries will share city-level experiences with planning, policies, and use of technologies for sustainable, resilient, low-carbon growth. This initiative will eventually include demonstrations of new technologies for smart infrastructure for urbanization. As a first step, the United States and China will convene a Climate-Smart/Low-Carbon Cities "Summit" where leading cities from both countries will share best practices, set new goals, and celebrate city-level leadership.

We ought to be in on that. Bill C-619 opens up these great possibilities for us and our cities, because as China and the U.S. recognize, meeting the targets that we set, the ones that we need to reach, means rethinking how we live, what we live in, and how we move around our cities. It means cities friendly to pedestrians and cyclists. It means rapid public transit and energy efficient buildings. It means trees and green. It means that vision I have set out in my urban white paper, and yet even more, including things we have yet to invent, yet to conceive. However, cities around the world and here in Canada are moving to this future without the federal government. They are innovating.

In those cities, we have a generation of young Canadians who are eager to get engaged in building the kinds of cities, communities, and neighbourhoods they want to live in. We have, in this climate change accountability act, the opportunity to open up the door and move through it into an exciting sustainable future. The door is ours, as politicians, to throw open with this bill.

Private Members' Business

The only truly important questions to be answered are still about us, not about the science or the math. They are about whether we are capable of seizing this moment, of seeing beyond ourselves at this time, in this place. To fail to do so would be a failing beyond us as politicians and our political system, a failing more fundamental.

As I said when I introduced this bill last June, all of us are entrusted with the care of the earth we inhabit and the well-being of those who inhabit it. We now need to act upon that responsibility. I urge all members of Parliament to support this bill.

● (1815)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am really glad that my colleague mentioned pedestrians and cyclists, but he might as well have mentioned canoeists as well.

By our estimates, to implement this bill today we would literally have to shut down the entire oil and gas sector, we would have to bring to a stop all transportation in this country, and we would have to end all electricity generation that produces emissions. Furthermore, we would not just have to do one of these three things, we would have to do all three.

Can the member tell us who he consulted prior to adopting his targets and tabling his bill in the House? Did he consult with the governments of the provinces and the territories? What about industries? I come from Oshawa where there is manufacturing industry. Did the member consult any industry out there? Were they supportive? Was anyone supportive of the targets laid out in this bill?

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, Canadians are supportive of the targets in the bill, because the targets mean the aversion from dangerous levels of climate change that has been set out over and over again by the scientists. The government ought to listen to the fact that it is not time to act now for the scientists or the mathematicians. They have done their job and provided us with the irrefutable science, and it is now time for us to act on that for our future, for the future of our children.

It is most disappointing, but not surprising, to see the government talk about all the negativity that flows from our efforts to deal with and avert dangerous climate change. Conservatives ought to read the Stern report on the economic opportunities available to us. They ought to read the Clean Energy Canada report about all the economic opportunities that are open to us as we address this issue.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our party will be supporting this. I thought the member's speech was thoughtful and quite reflective of the reality we are facing as a species, so to speak.

Unfortunately, the parliamentary secretary gave a demonstration of why we have made no progress in the last nine years, with rather juvenile questions about what we are actually facing as a nation.

I notice in the various provisions of the bill that there is no reference to carbon tax. The member knows, as do I, that his party and my party get continually criticized by the government for putting a tax on everything, and other nonsense that continues to be perpetrated. I wonder whether the omission of a carbon tax in the member's legislation was intentional.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his support for the bill. It will be no surprise to members in the House that the NDP believes that the primary mechanism to address climate change and carbon pricing is by way of a cap and trade system, and there is specific reference to that in the bill.

We have not raised this to an ideology. The bill is open to many other measures, and the language of the bill provides for other mechanisms and measures. In fact, one of the significant amendments and reasons for amendment of the bill from that which was originally tabled by Jack Layton in 2007 is precisely because subnational governments in this country have moved ahead with a variety of ways and measures of addressing carbon pricing.

Forming government, it would be our intention with an act like this to work with those subnational governments and find ways of pricing carbon and addressing global warming in a way that is constructive and helpful and acknowledges efforts that have been made by provinces across this country to date.

● (1820)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today to Bill C-619, the Climate Change Accountability Act.

I would like to begin by saying that the government does not support Bill C-619 for a number of reasons. The main reason is that the bill would require Canada to adopt unrealistic climate change targets. These targets could not be met without having a significant impact on the competitiveness of Canadian businesses. They would impose a heavy burden on taxpayers and would have a major negative impact on the economy as a whole.

If the targets set out in this bill were to be adopted, they would impose on Canada a disproportionate burden for reducing greenhouse gas emissions as compared to that imposed on the United States and our other trade partners. We are already taking a realistic, comprehensive approach to dealing with climate change at the national and international levels, and that approach is getting results for Canadians.

[*English*]

This bill would create an obligation on the federal government to ensure that Canadian greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by 34% below 1990 levels by 2025, and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. If converted from the 1990 baseline used in the bill to a 2005 baseline used by Canada, this target would be equivalent to a 47% reduction from 2005 levels by 2025.

Private Members' Business

This is simply an unrealistic target. Indeed, it translates to a target that is 20 percentage points more than the recently announced U.S. targets of 26% to 28% below 2005 levels by 2025. Adopting such a target would leave us with a far greater emissions reduction burden than our largest trading partner and, potentially, other key peer countries, and lead to negative economic impacts on Canadian industries, firms, and individual Canadians.

I would be very interested to know from the bill's sponsor how he proposes to achieve these reduction targets. Perhaps the members opposite will mention some new unheard-of technology that will allow us to meet these goals.

Looking at this another way, perhaps the hon. member is planning to meet these targets by slashing emissions in sectors that provide jobs and economic benefits for Canadians. In this case, achieving the reductions contemplated in this bill would mean eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from all transportation sources and all oil and gas sector activities combined by 2025. This is simply not realistic.

On the basis of these concerns and the fact that our government already has a comprehensive climate change agenda in place that is generating results for Canadians, our government does not support Bill C-619 and will instead continue to take decisive action on the environment while protecting our economy. Domestically, our government is pursuing a sector-by-sector regulatory approach to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. This approach makes it possible to tailor regulations according to individual sector circumstances, and to integrate environmental and economic considerations.

Regulations are designed to achieve emissions reductions, provide regulatory certainty, and leverage capital stock turnover to avoid locking in long-term high-emitting infrastructure. This approach allows Canada to maximize progress on reducing emissions while maintaining economic competitiveness. Our government has introduced regulations for two of the largest emitting sectors of the Canadian economy, the transportation and the electricity sectors.

As a result of regulations introduced for the transportation sector, for example, the 2025 model-year passenger vehicles and light trucks will emit about half as many greenhouse gas emissions as 2008 models, and greenhouse emission from 2018 model-year heavy-duty vehicles will be reduced by up to 23%.

● (1825)

In the electricity sector, our government has introduced stringent coal-fired electricity standards, making Canada the first major coal user to ban construction of traditional coal-fired electricity-generating units.

In the first 21 years, these regulations are expected to result in a cumulative reduction in greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing roughly 2.6 million personal vehicles from the road per year. This is an example where we consulted with stakeholders, unlike the NDP proposals, which would cripple our economy.

Building on this action, our government also recently announced the next steps for the development of regulation for hydrofluorocarbons, which is the fastest-growing set of greenhouse gases in the

world. In fact, this group of gases can be thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide.

To complement these regulatory efforts, since 2006, our government has made investments of over \$10 billion to transition Canada toward a clean energy economy and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the long term. The NDP voted against all of that. These measures include support for green infrastructure, energy efficiency, clean energy technologies and the production of cleaner energy and fossil fuels. These funds have helped establish Canada as a global leader in the research, development and demonstration of carbon capture and storage technologies, and assisted with developing the world's first post-combustion carbon capture project in a coal-fired power plant, a project which recently opened in Estevan, Saskatchewan, within the riding of Souris-Moose Mountain.

Our government has also taken action to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, such as tax preferences for oil sands producers and eliminating certain tax preferences for mining sectors, including coal. As a result of collective actions by all levels of government, as well as by consumers and businesses, Canada's 2020 greenhouse gas emissions are projected to be 130 megatonnes lower relative to the scenario with no action since 2005. In other words, relative to the scenario under the Liberals.

Moreover, between 1990 and 2012, the emissions intensity of the Canadian economy decreased by 29% and Canada's per capita emissions reached a historic low of 20.1 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per person, their lowest point since tracking began in 1990. These improvements in emissions intensity and emissions per capita are expected to continue through 2020.

Canada is playing a constructive role within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiation process and is committed to continue working toward the establishment of a new global climate change agreement. For Canada, an effective new international climate change agreement must be fair and, most important, such an agreement must include a commitment to action by all the world's major emitters of greenhouse gases.

The importance of this last point cannot be understated. Previous climate change agreements were supported by countries representing only a fraction of global emissions. Given Canada only accounts for less than 2% of global emissions, any new climate change agreement must include all these major emitters, including emerging economies that represent the bulk of projected growth in global greenhouse gas emissions.

Private Members' Business

Our government's international efforts also include providing support to other nations to help address climate change. Our government delivered \$1.2 billion in fast-start financing, which supports a wide range of climate change projects in developing countries around the world. Building on this effort, our government recently pledged \$300 million for the Green Climate Fund. The Green Climate Fund will play a key role in addressing climate change globally by balancing mitigation and adaptation initiatives, and focusing on helping the poorest countries.

Beyond the United Nations, our government is also advancing important work under a number of key international partnerships. These collaborative efforts include addressing short-lived climate pollutants, which help slow the rate of near-term warming, both globally and in the Arctic.

Clearly, our government already has a comprehensive climate change agenda in place that is achieving real results for Canadians. That is why we do not support this irresponsible bill, Bill C-619, and the unreasonable targets being proposed and, instead, continue to address climate change in a way that balances the environmental and economic objectives.

• (1830)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the parliamentary secretary's recitation of his talking points. I think I have heard them about a dozen times before. They are in some respects reflective of why there has been no progress made on this file in the last nine or ten years and the reason for the hon. member for Beaches—East York's presentation of what I consider to be a very able bill.

The NDP is a party that takes climate change and carbon pricing seriously. The Green Party is a party that takes climate change and carbon pricing seriously, as does the Liberal Party. The only party in the House that does not take either climate change or carbon pricing seriously is the Conservative Party, and the parliamentary secretary has just given a classic demonstration of why we have not made any progress on this file over the last nine years.

As the temperatures of the earth rise, Rome burns while Nero fiddles.

I found all of the things that the parliamentary secretary said they have done to be ironic. What he neglected to say is that there is absolutely no chance whatsoever that the government will achieve its own Copenhagen targets, which were watered down from those the previous government had set. We are in a situation where three out of the four parties in the House take the issue seriously but, regrettably, the governing party does not.

In the last few weeks, the leader of the Liberal Party gave a demonstration of how we would go about achieving these targets. The first thing he did was to meet with the premiers. That is a novel concept for the Prime Minister. He has had nine years to meet with the premiers, but unfortunately has not been able to clear up his schedule, except from time to time before hockey games, where he can fit in 15 or 20 minutes to meet with the premiers. On the other hand, the Liberal leader has met with many of the premiers, sometimes on multiple occasions. In the case of Premier Wynne, he has talked with her about the issue of pricing carbon.

B.C., Alberta, Quebec, and probably Ontario very shortly will all price carbon one way or another. That makes for about 85% of the overall economy. The junior levels of government have all moved on from the federal government, because the people of Canada and the premiers of Canada take the issue of pricing carbon seriously. The leader of the Liberal Party has met with those premiers who are taking this issue seriously.

The second thing he did was fly to Calgary. Not only did he fly to Calgary, but he also went to the Calgary Petroleum Club. He went there, a place not exactly friendly to a person of his last name, and reminded them of his last name. He told the people there that we in Canada have to price carbon. He said, "You know Canada needs to have a price on carbon. The good news is that we're already on our way." It was a mature and honest conversation with the area of the country that has the most difficulty with carbon emissions.

If the environmental argument does not persuade members, perhaps the economic argument will. If we are to get our resources to tidewater, we need to be serious about the environment. What is good for the environment is actually good for the whole economy.

The Keystone XL pipeline has been a colossal mess both economically and politically. It has been an economic and political disaster. In fact, it is a classic case of political mismanagement. Alienating the most powerful individual in the world about something that we need and want is wondrous to behold.

• (1835)

Not only does the Prime Minister not talk to the premiers, but he also does not talk to the leader of the free world and our largest trading partner. It seems a bizarre way to go about trying to get an international / North American price on carbon.

The leader of the Liberal Party proposed a model for Canadians that they understand and with which they have some experience—namely, a health care model. Canada is a confederation, and we succeed in this confederation when we collaborate. He suggested a health care model for how we will price carbon.

He then said we have to set the goals. That is consistent with what the hon. member for Beaches—East York indicated, that targets have to be set. The national government has to be engaged, whether it is cap and trade as it is with Quebec and California, possibly Ontario as well, or whether it is a tax as it is in British Columbia, whether it is revenue neutral or revenue generating. The leader of the Liberal Party is agnostic as to how a province or a territory will meet its goals. Do whatever it takes, but these will be the national goals and these will be the breakouts of the goals.

Private Members' Business

Fifth, acknowledge that some of the provinces will need more assistance than others, just as in the health care model. Some provinces are more successful at achieving health outcomes than are others. If we understand the health model that way, then we will also understand the model that is being suggested by the leader of the Liberal Party. If the parties were serious, we could get this done. The provinces and territories have not had a serious partner in nine years.

Sixth, he made a commitment to go to Paris in October or November of this year to negotiate Canada's final goals. Could someone please tell me the last time the Prime Minister of Canada attended a COP conference since 2006? The Prime Minister avoids those conferences like the plague because he is not serious. He is not serious about pricing carbon, and he is not serious about COP. If the leader of the Liberal Party has the good fortune of being elected as the prime minister of Canada, he has committed himself to go to Paris.

The seventh point is that the leader of the Liberal Party would call a conference of the confederation within 150 days of the commencement of government. He would go to the conference, get the targets, aggregate the targets among the various provinces and territories, and commit to what needs to be done to achieve the targets.

The nonsense that the parliamentary secretary spouted about destroying the economy in order to achieve the targets is just that. The federal government is nowhere to be found in the whole development of the clean energy sector. The sector has pretty well done it on its own, and it is responsible for an equal number of jobs to oil and gas, which is around 27,000 direct and 275,000 indirect jobs.

Finally, just to show that the government is not serious, there is a paragraph in the Lima conference that says that each nation will submit a target by the end of March, an intended nationally determined contribution, due at the end of March. I dare say that neither the minister nor the parliamentary secretary will be able to shed any light on whether that target has been set.

We will support this bill. It is a step in the right direction. It is a little overly prescriptive, but nevertheless it is a useful contribution to a debate. It shows a seriousness on the part of some parliamentarians to actually deal with what many say is the existential threat of our time.

I thank the hon. member for his efforts in putting together a very useful bill for the House to consider.

● (1840)

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Scarborough—Guildwood for his comments about some parliamentarians wanting to take this issue seriously. I would hope that more of us in this House would want to take this issue seriously, but I am pleased to hear that Liberals will be supporting the bill.

In 2011, a historic election for the NDP, we won a number of seats and became the official opposition for the first time in history. We were here for caucus meetings right after that election. My phone rang, and I knew it was Jack Layton calling me. He was calling around to people, asking them to serve in his shadow cabinet. He

was asking us to shadow the Prime Minister's cabinet in different roles.

When my phone rang, he asked me if I would serve as the environment critic, and I was thrilled. I was thrilled because all I have ever wanted to work on are issues of justice. For me, justice is social justice, economic justice, and environmental justice.

I was really excited to work on this portfolio. When I was on the phone with him, I told Jack I wanted to meet with him and talk about my mandate. If I am working on the environment portfolio, what mandate should I serve under? He said we would have a lot of time to talk about that, but that I needed to understand that the most important issue facing us today is climate change, because climate change affects poverty, it affects security, it affects agriculture. It can create famine. It has the potential to affect everything, so everything one does has to be seen through that lens of climate change.

Jack and I never got to have that follow-up talk, but I took that mandate of applying the lens of climate change to everything I work on.

After his death, we had a leadership race. The member for Outremont is now the Leader of the Opposition. He asked me if I would keep this portfolio, and I said that I would, gladly, but under one condition: that I carry out that mandate of using the lens of climate change for everything I do. My leader, the member for Outremont said, "Of course, because that is all that matters here."

So here we have the climate change accountability act, initially tabled by Jack Layton in the 39th Parliament, but unfortunately it did not make it through the Senate because we had an election, and that kills all legislation.

We reintroduced it in the 40th Parliament, because we in the NDP are plucky like that. We keep going at it. The bill passed all the stages in the House of Commons and then was voted down by an unelected and unaccountable Senate.

I was with Jack that evening, and I have never seen him angry like that. I have never seen him yell like that. He was very angry, and rightly so, because we were democratically elected members of the House and we had said that yes, we need to take action on climate change, we need to legislate these targets, we are working with the international community, we are working with environment organizations, and this is what we have to do—and the Senate voted it down.

It is now the 41st Parliament, and we have brought it back. I really want to thank and applaud my colleague, the member for Beaches—East York, for his commitment to climate change, his commitment to his constituents, and his commitment to our future. We all owe him for bringing this bill back after his election.

We are bringing it back, and if it fails, we will bring it back again. If it fails again, we will keep bringing it back, and if we have to form government to get the bill to pass, we will form government to get the bill to pass, because we are committed to legislating our targets.

How will we achieve these reductions? First, of course, we are going to legislate the targets, just as the bill says, and then we are going to act.

Private Members' Business

We are the only recognized party in the House of Commons that has committed to putting a price on carbon. Our preferred mechanism is cap and trade, as it was in the last election, but it is not just about a price on carbon. It is not about cap and trade or carbon tax or fee and dividend. These are little economic models, these mechanisms, and they work. We have seen them work around the world, but it is not just about a price on carbon.

I am really proud to be a member of the NDP, a social democratic party. Social democratic parties have a history of leading economic transformations. If we look to jurisdictions where there have been social democratic governments, they are frequently at the top when it comes to innovation. They are at the top of the list, and we can draw lessons from our history as social democrats to create the green transformation that we need here in Canada.

• (1845)

The key difference with the NDP's approach, a social democratic approach to environmental justice, is that the principles of equality and fairness, and the provision of social security are fundamental conditions for this type of transformation that I am talking about. That is the transformation we need in order to deal with climate change. These things are must-haves; they are not things that would be nice to have.

We have to build solidarity if we are to tackle climate change, and so we need to focus on capturing the benefits of a green energy economy. We need to make sure that people receive the benefits of energy efficiency services. We need to ensure that cities and our local communities can grab hold of the green technology sectors. It is that solidarity that I am talking about.

I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment ask, what kind of wacky technology are we going to use to bring down these emissions. Well, how about the wacky technology of energy efficiency? The cheapest source of energy is the energy that we do not use.

I know it sounds wacky, but it is these energy efficiency programs. If we look at the old home energy retrofit program, it created jobs in every single community, from Nanaimo to Ecum Secum to Brantford, in every community. There would be two energy auditors and four home retrofitters. Those jobs were in all of our communities. That was our local economy. It also brought down our emissions. We saw the results from Environment Canada showing good reductions in emissions. It also put money in our pockets. We were well on our way to figuring out how to offer this to low-income Canadians as well, and we see those kinds of low-income programs at the provincial level.

This is what I am talking about when I say that building solidarity is key to fighting climate change. This is what I am talking about when I say that we need to look at the social, environmental, and economic aspects of justice.

The NDP is committed to investing in green technology and renewables. We are committed to things like loan guarantees to provinces and first nations who want to capture that exciting transition to the green energy economy. This is what we are all about.

As proof of that commitment, my colleague, the MP for Drummond, brought forward an energy efficiency motion. My colleague, the MP for Edmonton—Strathcona, understands the need for transformational change and developed a Canadian environmental bill of rights in which we would enshrine the right to live in a healthy environment. Can members imagine if we had that right as Canadians?

This is about real ideas that will work. This is about drawing on that social democratic history to lead that economic transformation to the green energy economy. This is about justice: environmental justice, social justice, and economic justice.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this debate today. I do appreciate the efforts of the hon. member in presenting Bill C-619, but I intend to join with the government in opposing this bill and the unrealistic climate change targets that it would impose upon Canadians.

The targets specified in the bill simply cannot be achieved without significant negative economic effects upon Canadians. Moreover, the government has already delivered a comprehensive suite of climate change initiatives that is generating real results for Canadians a way that does not harm our economy.

Further, unlike previous agreements, the international climate change agreement, which will be concluded in Paris later this year, is expected to require countries to submit specific plans showing how they will achieve the targets that they propose. That is only common sense.

The time is long past when politicians could pull the wool over the eyes of voters by proposing feel-good climate change targets without any specific plan to achieve them.

A specific plan is exactly what is missing from this bill. The hon. member has not included any plan whatsoever in his bill. It does not measure up to current international standards. For that reason alone, the House should not support the bill.

The Conservative government, by contrast, I am proud to say, has a plan. The government is committed to addressing climate change. It is continuing to advance a sector-by-sector regulatory approach to reduce the major sources of greenhouse gas emissions across the country.

Canada is a vast northern country with large distances between urban centres and a rapidly growing population, so we face unique challenges in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. A sector-by-sector approach allows the government to tailor regulations for each economic sector, reducing emissions efficiently, while still safeguarding jobs.

Because of our close economic ties with the United States, we also work to align our greenhouse gas regulations with those in the U.S., as appropriate for the Canadian context.

This sector-by-sector approach allows the Government of Canada to work collaboratively with provincial and territorial governments to avoid duplication of efforts through measures such as equivalency agreements. Officials engage regularly with provincial and territorial colleagues and other stakeholders to develop federal regulations.

The government also works collaboratively with provinces and territories in a leading role through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, which will consider climate change strategies across the country in the coming year.

The government has successfully taken the initiative on two of our largest sources of emissions: transportation and electricity generation. The transportation sector produces nearly a quarter of all GHG emissions in Canada. That is why the government has made regulations for the transportation sector a key priority in its action on climate change.

The government is targeting emissions from transportation by setting stringent greenhouse gas emission standards for both light and heavy duty on-road vehicles. We are also aligning with the U.S. on these measures, given the high degree of integration of our automotive markets.

In October 2010, the government put in place greenhouse gas regulations for passenger automobiles and light trucks for model years 2011 to 2016, so new vehicles purchased by Canadians emit fewer greenhouse gases and, by the way, are more fuel efficient. Over the lifetime of all 2011 to 2016 model year vehicles sold in Canada, this will result in an actual cumulative reduction of 92 megatonnes of GHG emissions.

● (1850)

However, continued advances in vehicle technologies have provided an opportunity to introduce a whole new generation of vehicles emitting even fewer greenhouse gases. As a result, in October 2014, the government finalized new regulations to establish progressively more stringent greenhouse gas emission standards for light-duty vehicles of model years 2017 to 2025. As a result of these measures, 2025 model year cars and light trucks will consume up to 50% less fuel than 2008 models, leading to significant savings at the pumps for drivers as well, and they will only emit half as many GHGs as the 2008 models. Over the lifetime of these 2017 to 2025 model year vehicles, these measures will deliver total GHG reductions of 174 megatonnes.

Canada is also reducing emissions from on-road heavy-duty vehicles. In 2013, the government implemented regulations to put stringent standards in place for the 2014 to 2018 model year heavy-duty vehicles such as full-size pickups, garbage trucks, and buses. These regulations reduce actual GHG emissions from 2018 model year heavy-duty vehicles by up to 23%. Building on this real success, the Minister of the Environment recently announced proposed regulations to further reduce GHG emissions from heavy-duty vehicles for post-2018 model years.

The government has also delivered real reductions in the electricity sector. Specifically, we now have regulations to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired electricity generation. Canada is the first major coal user in the world to ban the construction of traditional coal-fired electricity-generating units. The

Private Members' Business

regulations also require the phase-out of existing coal-fired units that do not capture and store the carbon dioxide they emit.

Taking action now to regulate coal-fired electricity generation achieves multiple health and environmental benefits. Our measures will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 214 megatonnes by the year 2036. This is equivalent to removing 2.6 million personal vehicles from the road every year over this period. These regulations will also deliver significant air-quality and health benefits, reducing emissions of harmful pollutants like sulphur dioxide, nitrous oxides, and mercury from coal-fired electricity generation, all associated with a wide range of negative health outcomes.

Canada already has one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, and these regulations will take us even further, a permanent transition toward lower emitting and non-emitting electricity generation such as high-efficiency natural gas and renewable energy sources.

Building on these very real successes in the transportation and electricity sectors, in December 2014 the government published notice of its intent to regulate hydrofluorocarbons. HFCs are greenhouse gases that are actually thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide. They are used as coolants in refrigeration and air conditioning in homes, buildings, industrial facilities, cars, and trucks and in other ways elsewhere. HFCs currently account for less than 2% of global GHG emissions, but if left unchecked, emissions of HFCs are expected to increase substantially in the next 10 to 15 years. These measures are intended to control the manufacture, import, and use of HFCs in Canada.

The Government of Canada will continue to work closely with stakeholders, provinces, territories, and our largest trading partner, the United States, to implement GHG-reduction measures. The government takes climate change seriously and will continue its sector-by-sector regulatory approach to deliver additional reductions while protecting economic growth and job creation.

Bill C-619, on the other hand, is proposing targets that would not fulfill these goals but would do the opposite. That is why I join with the government in opposing this bill.

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before I recognize the hon. member for Drummond, I must inform him that there is one minute remaining in the time provided for private members' business.

The hon. member for Drummond.

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Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Beaches—East York for his bill to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change.

I am very pleased to support this bill because it offers hope. Why? Because it was once Jack Layton's, and the member took up the torch and introduced the bill. What was Jack Layton's legacy? His legacy was hope.

I know that the Conservatives like to pit the environment and the economy against one another, but this bill puts the environment and the economy on the same side, and that is very good for Canada, the environment and economic development.

People across Canada will benefit from this bill because it will create jobs in research and innovation in a low-carbon-emissions economy.

Many businesses in the riding of Drummond are already benefiting from this new technology. I would like to list just a few of them: Aéronergie, Annexair and Venmar. These companies are involved in heat recovery and technological innovation. These are incredible opportunities for Drummond's economy.

We must move forward with an ambitious plan to fight climate change. Our leader, the Leader of the Opposition, who will be the next prime minister, will be the first Canadian prime minister to go to Paris and come back with an ambitious plan to fight climate change. He will take the lead, and we will all be very proud to be there to support him.

• (1900)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Drummond will have nine minutes to finish his speech when the House resumes debate on this motion.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to follow up on a series of questions I asked of the government some time ago, specifically the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, about the high and unacceptable rates of poverty faced by first nations in our country. I specifically highlighted the rates of poverty and the challenging life conditions existing in my home province of Manitoba.

I am honoured to represent 33 first nations. These are incredible communities. They are diverse, young, with much hope and energy, yet as the research that has come out in recent weeks shows, they face the greatest challenges when it comes to living conditions.

Many people in these communities characterize their living conditions as third world.

This is Canada. It is 2015. We are one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and yet the first peoples of our country still live in conditions that most Canadians could not even imagine exist here. We are talking about homes that are mouldy and overcrowded. I have been in homes where 17 people are living in that one house. We are talking about lack of water and sewer services. Yes, in communities like Island Lake, progress has been made, but too many people still lack access to running water.

I have been in homes that have to resort to outhouses because of issues with plumbing and infrastructure, which simply do not exist. I have been in first nation schools that, as we know, are notoriously underfunded by this federal government, and were by previous Liberal governments as well. Teachers do not have enough money to buy books, and there are not enough resources to hire specialized teachers, and kids have to do with less, simply because they are from first nations.

These levels of inequality and poverty are unacceptable.

I want to point to the unprecedented conversation happening in Manitoba and in many other parts of the country about the levels of systemic discrimination that first nation and indigenous people face in our country. On so many measures, aboriginal people fall lower, or in some cases higher, than other Canadians. But in all cases they face greater challenges. We know this has everything to do with the federal government's approach to indigenous peoples, not just over the last few years, but over decades as well. It is under this Conservative government that we have seen deep cuts and real neglect in treating indigenous peoples with respect, with a nation-to-nation relationship framework, and understanding and working in partnership with indigenous communities to be able to address the significant challenges they face.

As a result, I rise in the House to refer to the levels of aboriginal poverty. Some 62% of aboriginal children in Manitoba live in poverty and 25% of aboriginal children across the country do so as well. I ask how this federal government does not see a problem. On behalf of the people I represent, and in conjunction with so many indigenous people across the country, I ask for federal action to deal with these unacceptable realities.

• (1905)

[Translation]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in order to answer the question posed by the hon. member for Churchill this evening.

As the minister has already said, our government believes that first nations should have the same quality of life, the same opportunities and the same choices as all other Canadians.

When it came to power, our government promised to work for the first nations, but the NDP voted against almost every measure we introduced.

Let us look at this past fiscal year, for example. In 2013-14 alone, we invested more than \$1 billion in support for Manitoba's first nations.

[*English*]

I would like to highlight just a few ways we have been working with Manitoba first nations to improve their quality of life.

Specifically with respect to housing, we invested roughly \$38 million in 2013-14. Since being elected, our government has built nearly 2,000 homes on reserve in Manitoba alone. We are not only ensuring that Manitoba first nations have homes to live in; we want to make sure that they are serviced to the same standard as those off reserve.

As we speak, homes in the first nations communities of St. Theresa Point, Wasagamack, Garden Hill, and Red Sucker Lake are getting investments in their infrastructure. Economic action plan investments have allowed our government to retrofit 318 homes and to purchase six water trucks, seven sewage trucks, and over 200 water and sewage tanks in these communities alone. These are renovations and purchases, I might add, that the NDP insisted on voting against.

We have also made significant investments in first nations water and waste water. In November 2013, the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act came into force. Once the regulations are complete, this landmark piece of legislation will ensure that first nations enjoy the same quality of drinking water as all other Canadians.

We are making sure that the funding is in place to implement the goals of this act. A \$10.7-million upgraded waste water facility, including a new sewage treatment plant, is nearing completion for the God's Lake First Nation. It will serve over 1,400 Manitobans who live on reserve.

We are also investing in jobs and skills training. In January 2014, our government announced that more than 150 first nation young adults in Manitoba would be connected to skills training and jobs through enhanced service delivery.

As members can see, whether it relates to housing or water and waste water, our government is committed to improving the lives of first nations on reserve, despite the fact that the NDP continues to oppose these excellent investments.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the reference to the kinds of commitments that have been made to our region. They are

Adjournment Proceedings

commitments people have fought for. In fact, I have been involved in advocating for many of these priorities, alongside chiefs, councils, leaders, and regional leaders. The reality is that there is so much more that needs to be done.

Recent reports documented by the Canadian Press indicate chronic underfunding and a systemic issue at hand. The reality is that, yes, important infrastructure investments are being made as a result of tireless advocacy, but much more needs to be done.

When we look at the disproportionate levels of poverty, it is clear, and I am sure that it is clear to many members of the government, that the status quo is not working.

The government member across referred to the minister's commitment. I will highlight the fact that over the last couple of days, in raising the issue of fire safety, I have been struggling to find the minister's commitment. In fact, I have seen much enthusiasm to try to blame first nations rather than to get to the table and make the difference that is required.

• (1910)

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I would like to make reference to yet another project our government has undertaken to improve life on Manitoba reserves.

Earlier this month, our government announced funding for the construction of access roads to the Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids First Nations. Right now these first nations are accessible only by air or winter road. However, when completed, these roads will ensure that the Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids First Nations are connected to Manitoba's existing infrastructure network. This will make it easier for individuals living in these remote first nations to access training or job sites, and it will ultimately improve economic prospects.

This is just another example of the work our government is doing to encourage healthy, prosperous and self-sufficient communities in Manitoba.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(the House adjourned at 7:11 p.m.)

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