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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[*English*]

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

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

OBSERVATORY ON RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservative government is serious about preventing radicalization in Canada, it should listen to the people who are working on that, such as Montreal's police chief, who says that we need to focus on those who are most at risk. Surveillance is one thing, but guidance and deradicalization are important too. He says that in the fight against terrorism, preventing youth radicalization is key.

In Quebec, several measures have been implemented to address those needs. A number of police forces are working with communities, tapping into their expertise and knowledge of the field. In academia, for example, the Université de Sherbrooke's observatory on radicalization and violent extremism has set out to paint a picture of the situation with a view to developing prevention policies.

The next federal budget must include financial assistance for Quebec, which wants to implement an action plan to fight fundamentalism and prevent radicalization.

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[*English*]

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Fort McMurray oil sands have provided widespread wealth

but have also drawn criticism for greenhouse gases created in the process of extracting Alberta crude from the oil sands.

While environmental organizations have been protesting to have the oil sands closed down, the industry has been working hard in research labs across the country on greenhouse reduction technologies and strategies. In many cases, they are working together to share best practices and innovation through partnerships such as Canada's Oil Sands Innovation Alliance.

Alberta Energy reports that since 1990, oil sands producers have reduced per barrel emissions by an average of 26%. Some have achieved reductions as high as 50%. New, promising technologies are being explored as we speak, which will further lower the amount of greenhouse gases emitted per barrel of oil.

Our oil sands industry is greatly improving Canadians' standard of living and is investing in and creating new environmentally friendly technologies.

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[*Translation*]

WATER PROTECTION

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the poet W. H. Auden said that thousands have lived without love, not one without water.

I was one of the founding members of the Conseil du bassin versant de Vaudreuil-Soulanges, and the protection of our waters is one of the issues that motivated me to join the NDP team in 2011.

Since 1999, the National Energy Board has been asking Enbridge for a rehabilitation plan, including the installation of safety valves to protect the waterways that pipeline 9B runs through. Enbridge dragged its feet for 14 years, while the National Energy Board twiddled its thumbs. In March 2014, the board finally imposed some conditions. Enbridge has yet to meet those requirements.

It is time to take our water resources seriously. I add my voice to those of the people who live in the Ottawa River and St. Lawrence River watershed. Our message to the National Energy Board is this: "Enough is enough. Enforce your own conditions."

Public safety and environmental protection must be among our top priorities, and they will be when we form the next government with the member for Outremont and former environment minister as our prime minister in 2015.

Statements by Members

[English]

TIBET

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday many parliamentarians and Tibetans from across Canada gathered on Parliament Hill to mark the 56th anniversary of the uprising of the Tibetan people against the Chinese communist invaders and the occupation of their country. During this gathering, we were reminded that in Tibet today, the very basic human rights of Tibetan people are being violated by the Chinese communist government.

I am sad to say that this past Thursday, a 47-year-old wife and mother of three living in a Tibetan county in western China's Sichuan province burned herself to death in protest against communist policies in Tibetan areas. She is the 137th known case of self-immolation by a Tibetan since the fiery protests began in 2009.

These deaths are a grim reminder of the struggle of the Tibetan people against the Chinese communist government and the ongoing fight for human rights in the world. Canada will always remain committed to standing up for human rights and freedoms. Canada stands with Tibet.

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• (1410)

RUSSIA

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Nadiya Savchenko, a Ukrainian pilot, Iraqi war veteran, and member of the Ukrainian parliament, has been held as a prisoner of war in Russia since June 24, 2014.

Last summer, Nadiya was kidnapped by Russian armed and Russian-led forces and illegally transferred to Russia. There she was detained and questioned by Russian intelligence about the deaths of two Russian journalists during a mortar attack, but cellphone records confirm that she was already in Russian custody before the journalists were killed. Nonetheless, Russian courts have continued to push the Kremlin's falsehood that she crossed the border voluntarily and have refused appeals for bail or house arrest.

This past Sunday, on International Women's Day, supporters in Toronto, across Canada, and around the world came together to fast in solidarity with Nadiya's 83-day hunger strike and to call for her immediate release.

Canada and the House should join their American and European allies and pass a resolution demanding Nadiya's immediate return to Ukraine.

[Member spoke in Ukrainian as follows:]

Slava Ukraini. Slava heroini.

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VANCOUVER COMMUNITY LEADER

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to rise to pay tribute to a great Vancouverite and Canadian, Mrs. Maggie Ip, who has tirelessly served others through many initiatives and strong leadership. A graduate of the University

of Ottawa, she worked for the federal government prior to moving to Vancouver in 1970. A professional educator with 30 years of teaching experience, Maggie was elected to Vancouver city council in 1993.

In acknowledgement of her seminal role as the founder and patron of S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Maggie was recently bestowed a special 50th anniversary Canadian flag by the Prime Minister.

Maggie has been tireless in her work to integrate newcomers to Canada through employment, health, education, training, social services, good citizenship, and community participation. She served on the boards of the United Way, the YWCA, the Vancouver Public Library, Immigrant Services Society of B.C., and the B.C. Heritage Language Association, just to name a few.

Today, on behalf of my constituents and Canadians across Canada, I extend my thanks and admiration to Maggie Ip for her lifetime of service.

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COUGAR FLIGHT 491

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks the sixth anniversary of the tragic crash of Cougar Flight 491 off Newfoundland, which claimed the lives of 17 offshore workers. They died when the helicopter suffered a dramatic loss of oil pressure and minutes later crashed into the north Atlantic.

The lives lost will be remembered tomorrow, but the tragedy also serves as a reminder that health and safety must always be paramount and that we must always be vigilant. Night flights to the offshore must not be allowed to resume. The government has yet to move a recommendation calling for a distinct safety agency to monitor industry practices.

A memorial to those who died on the Cougar flight has been erected at Quidi Vidi Lake in east end St. John's, but the family and friends of the victims are sure to gather at the fence surrounding the Cougar hangar to place wreaths and cards and to share memories on the anniversary of the Cougar crash.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are also sure to ask themselves a question: What more must be done to improve offshore safety?

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KITCHENER

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the good-hearted people of Kitchener Centre. I offer every encouragement I can to their good work.

Kitchener is the birthplace of restorative justice, with great organizations like Community Justice Initiatives, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Crime Prevention Council, and Youth in Conflict, bringing hope to many people.

Statements by Members

Kitchener epitomizes the barn-raising mentality with agencies like Communitech, Conestoga College, the Creative Enterprise Initiative, the University of Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier University all leading collaborations for prosperity.

Organizations like Women's Crisis Services, The Working Centre, Ray of Hope, and House of Friendship, among others, are the heart of Kitchener, bringing compassion to those in need. They deserve the support of every Kitchener resident and the support of every level of government.

No community could make an MP more proud than my riding of Kitchener Centre.

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WORLD PLUMBING DAY

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is World Plumbing Day, an opportunity to recognize the very important contribution the plumbing sector makes in our lives every day.

The United Nations declared 2005 to 2015 the International Decade for Action “Water for Life”, setting a world agenda that focuses increased attention on water-related issues. In our world, preventable diseases related to water and sanitation claim the lives of about 3.1 million people per year, most of them children younger than five. Of these, about 1.6 million people die each year of diseases associated with the lack of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

I would like to pay tribute to the leadership of the Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating, which supports manufacturers, distributors, and associates in the plumbing and waterworks industry. It also runs the career tap program to encourage Canadians to choose plumbing as a high-skill career.

If members had a safe, clean drink of water today, they should thank a plumber.

* * *

• (1415)

INCOME SECURITY

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my role as NDP critic for persons with disabilities, I get to speak with disability groups across Canada, and repeatedly I get the same messages: This government should be working with its provincial partners to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it should be addressing income security issues facing the disabled, and it should be doing more to accommodate those disabled people who wish to work.

The NDP has already committed to implement the UN convention, but today I want to address the issue of income security for the disabled. The fact is that a person with a disability is twice as likely to experience poverty as other Canadians.

Today I have tabled a motion to establish a special committee of the House to review income security for persons with disabilities, to consult broadly with those persons and with disability organizations, and to report back to the House with concrete recommendations to improve their income security.

Canada's commitment under the UN convention is to ensure that persons with disabilities can participate fully in our society. One important step would be to lift them out of poverty. I hope all members will support this.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it should come as no surprise that our Conservative government is the only one that stands up for middle-class Canadian families.

Through our low-tax plan for families, our government is helping 100% of families with children receive the benefits they need so they can put their hard-earned money toward their own priorities. We have doubled the children's fitness tax credit, enhanced the universal child care benefit and now have implemented the family tax cut. All parents, including single parents, will benefit from these measures. That is over four million families and over seven million parents.

Clearly, the idea of the Liberals and the New Democrats for Canadians is high taxes and high debt. They will take away our benefits and implement a job-killing carbon tax that will raise the price of everything.

The facts are crystal clear. Only our Conservative government can be trusted to keep money in the pockets of Canadian families.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to meet with Girls Government, students from Holy Family and Queen Victoria schools in Parkdale. The girls are working toward mandatory labelling for genetically modified organisms, or GMOs.

What an impressive group of girls. They are writing letters to the Minister of Health, to editors of local newspapers, as well as holding a press conference on the issue.

My provincial colleague, Cheri DiNovo, and I want to encourage girls to be active in their communities and their governments. We hope to see more women involved in politics, both running for office and working behind the scenes.

Equal representation can be achieved. As parliamentarians, it is our job to work toward this goal by encouraging youth activism. We can see the results here in our caucus.

Girls Government shows us that when we empower women and girls anything is possible.

*Oral Questions***JUSTICE**

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as part of our government's commitment to ensuring the safety of our children and youth, I am pleased to announce today that the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act has come fully into force.

Canadians across the country have been confronted by the harmful reality of cyberbullying. With the coming into force of the legislation, we are sending a strong message to those who are out to harm our children that there is a point where bullying behaviour goes beyond that and becomes criminal behaviour.

The legislation will give law enforcement officers the tools they need to investigate these high-tech crimes, while also making it an offence to distribute intimate images online. It will also empower the court to remove intimate images and make it a crime to share intimate images. It will make it possible to seize the devices used to actually commit the crime.

The Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act builds on the more than 30 tough-on-crime pieces of legislation put forward by the government. With the coming into force of this legislation, we are tackling the growing problem of cyberbullying and keeping online—

• (1420)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Papineau.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL FRANCOPHONIE MONTH

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, my son Xavier was very proud to tell me that his school, which is part of the francophone public school board of eastern Ontario, was celebrating Francophonie month. This is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate the millions of francophones living across Canada.

Today, francophones around the world are coming to Canada to benefit from and contribute to our rich cultural and linguistic diversity. Canadian francophones have been a part of our vibrant country for centuries and continue to be vital to our successes.

This year, we can also celebrate the fact that the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean was elected Secretary-General of la Francophonie.

Francophonie month is an opportunity to promote the French language here in Canada and around the world. Let us celebrate loudly and proudly.

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[English]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader is being criticized for comparing current debates to the turning away of Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 1940s. Let me share what the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs had to say:

We view this comparison as inaccurate and inappropriate, and we will communicate that sentiment to [the Liberal leader's] office...we note that the Government of Canada has appropriately and consistently distinguished between marginal, extreme, terrorist elements of the Muslim community and the broader

Muslim community. This distinction is reflected by the more than 300,000 Muslim immigrants who have been welcomed to Canada since 2006, and no less by remarks offered by Defence Minister...supporting the Muslim community as recently as last Saturday

The Liberal leader must apologize for his comments.

* * *

[Translation]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it seems that dinosaurs are not extinct. There are even a few specimens left in the Conservative caucus.

Recently, a Conservative member called into question the theory of evolution. Then a Conservative member said that sex education in schools would push children into the arms of pedophiles.

Then, last Friday, the member for New Brunswick Southwest said that the real problem with the temporary foreign worker program is that it brings too many “brown people” to Canada while “whities” languish on unemployment insurance.

Those remarks are so shocking that even some Conservative members were critical of their New Brunswick colleague.

The general election is fast approaching. We cannot wait for Canadians to get rid of these dinosaurs.

* * *

[English]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader is being criticized for comparing current debates to the turning away of Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 1940s. Let me share what B'nai Brith Canada had to say:

[The] Liberal leader[s]...comparison of Canada's current immigration policy to that of the 1940's which saw Jews barred from the country is wholly inappropriate... [The Liberal leader] is the latest in a long line of politicians who fall into the trap of drawing highly-inappropriate and offensive Nazi-era comparisons by using the term 'none is too many' haphazardly. Such language is divisive and only does a disservice to Canadians interested in dealing with pressing issues of the day. We must find the balance between freedom and security without resorting to inaccurate historical parallels that have no bearing on reality. The threat of radicalization and jihadist terror is real. We must all work together to address that threat while being part of a tolerant and pluralistic society

The Liberal leader must apologize for his comments.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister planning an extension or expansion of Canada's role in the war in Iraq?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank the House for its support of the original mission that we put forward. I would also note the strong support of Canadians in the mission. We believe combatting ISIL is essential for the security of our own country.

In terms of extension, expansion, renewal, the government has not yet taken a decision, but of course it will inform the House as soon as it has done so.

•(1425)

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, he is leading us into a quagmire.

Does the Prime Minister have the slightest idea as to when and how he will get our troops out of Iraq?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the government appreciates the House's support for the mission against the Islamic State, and of course it appreciates Canadians' support for our soldiers who are participating in this mission, which is essential to Canada's security. The government will decide on the next steps in the near future.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, three Conservative ministers, senior political staffers and the Prime Minister's favourite chief of staff pushed through a grant for a "dear friend" of the Conservatives. It was a \$1 million political gift. The Minister of Public Works only dared to go ahead after discussing this with the Prime Minister's own chief of staff.

What was Nigel Wright doing in the approval process in the first place?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister has made it clear that it was she who made the decision based on her belief that the project that would assist those with disabilities in the Markham area was in the public interest. The minister was acting within her discretionary authority as a minister. I think it is also clear she was acting in good faith.

Obviously we will examine the report to determine how things can be done in the future.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us now look at the facts.

Of the 167 projects submitted, only five were selected. The first four met all of the criteria and the fifth was managed by a good friend of the Conservatives. According to the department's objective evaluation, this project was one of the worst of the 167 projects. Guess which one was chosen. Yes, that is right.

If this was done in good faith, as the Prime Minister just claimed, why is the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner blaming his minister for committing an illegal act and failing to co-operate with the investigation?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the contrary. The minister co-operated with the investigation for three years.

The reality is that the minister based her decision on the independent evaluation she received. This is not a private project. It involves a community centre for people with disabilities. It is a public project in the public interest. The evidence shows that the minister acted in good faith.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the evidence actually shows is that Nigel Wright testified before the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. He said that the Prime Minister asked him, and I quote from his testimony, to "sort it out", with respect to the grant for their Conservative friend.

Does the Prime Minister ask his chief of staff to sort out all of the grants his government hands out, or just the ones for good friends of the Conservative Party who take the Prime Minister's private plane?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the opposite. The report is clear on that.

[English]

It is very clear that I was not familiar with the specifics of any of these applications. I had no preference whatsoever on the applications. It was the minister herself who made the decisions.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made more alarming statements yesterday on the rights and freedoms of Canadians. Could he please explain to Canada's half a million Muslim women why he said their chosen faith was anti-women?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, I said no such thing.

What is far more disconcerting are the statements that have been made by the Liberal leader and condemned by prominent organizations.

B'nai Brith Canada said that the Liberal leader's:

—language is divisive and only does a dis-service to Canadians interested in dealing with pressing issues of the day...The threat of radicalization and jihadist terror is real.

Here is what another organization said:

—the Government of Canada has appropriately and consistently distinguished between marginal, extreme, terrorist elements of the Muslim community and the broader Muslim community. This distinction is reflected by the more than 300,000 Muslim immigrants who have been welcomed to Canada since 2006.

Those are the facts.

•(1430)

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister also said yesterday that religious freedoms should be overruled because almost all Canadians do not support the wearing of a niqab.

Oral Questions

We have seen this before. He was the Reform Party's policy chief when it voted to prevent Sikh RCMP officers from wearing turbans, saying it was a needless concession to a Canadian minority.

Twenty-five years later, why does the Prime Minister still insist that the majority should dictate the religious rights of minorities?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote what the organization Muslims Facing Tomorrow says:

The requirement of Citizenship and Immigration Canada to remove full face coverings during citizenship ceremonies is not onerous and is consistent with the customs and conventions of an open liberal democratic society such as ours.

Let me quote what the Coalition of Progressive Canadian Muslim Organizations says, "Most Canadians believe that it is offensive that someone would hide their identity at the very moment where they are committing to join the Canadian family".

These are not the views only of the overwhelming majority of Canadians, they are the views of the overwhelming majority of moderate Muslims. It is up to the leader of the Liberal Party to explain why he is so far outside that mainstream.

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just wish the Prime Minister had actually listened to what our courts said.

[*Translation*]

There are still too many atrocities in the world being committed against women.

However, the Minister of National Defence chose International Women's Day to continue his campaign of fear by posting misleading photos. The defence minister managed to insult half a million Muslim women with that underhanded trick.

Will the Prime Minister call on his Minister of National Defence to remove those misleading photos?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is odd that the hon. leader of the Liberal Party does not understand that one of the reasons we are in Iraq is to help the government and civilians, as well as to protect women and girls who are raped and who are forced into sexual slavery by Daesh. Even the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights believes that rape and other forms of sexist and sexual violence are being perpetrated against women and children.

We stand with the women of Iraq against the violence perpetrated by Daesh.

* * *

ETHICS

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the ethics commissioner found that the former human resources minister circumvented the rules to give preferential treatment to a group in Markham. Now that the cat is out of the bag, the Prime Minister is trying to distance himself from the whole thing, but he is not fooling anyone.

When she approved the funding in defiance of all the rules, Nigel Wright was holding her hand, and the Prime Minister's current chief of staff was probably the one who handed her the pen.

How can the Prime Minister continue to deny his involvement in this blatant case of favouritism?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is utterly ridiculous.

I have always believed that this project to improve access to the Markham centre for people with disabilities was valid and in the public interest.

I accept the commissioner's advice to ensure that these funding programs are administered in a fair, accessible and efficient way for everyone concerned.

• (1435)

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cannot weasel out of it that easily. Either he told his chief of staff and his secretary to direct the Minister of Public Works to give preferential treatment to a good friend of the Conservatives, or senior officials in his political office were scheming with the Minister of Public Works behind his back.

What is the Prime Minister's explanation? Did he intervene on behalf of a friend of the Conservatives, or has he lost control of his political staff? It has to be one or the other.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the commissioner stated quite clearly that the Prime Minister had nothing to do with the decision about this funding.

I myself made the decision because I have always believed that this project would improve access to the Markham centre for people with disabilities and that it was in the public's best interest.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works tells us she does not remember talking to Nigel Wright about this deal that has gotten her into so much trouble. That is really odd because Wright, the Prime Minister's right hand, not only remembers the conversation, he remembers the content.

He said that that minister talked to him about this project that she knew was a dud, but she wanted to find out how important it was to the Conservative Party. The Prime Minister said "sort it out" and presto, \$1 million flowed to a Conservative ally.

Will the minister put aside this convenient amnesia and just explain to us why she put the interests of this party ahead of the interests of the Canadian people?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I always believed that this was a valid project for improving access for people with disabilities.

I co-operated fully with the commissioner's investigation, which lasted three years and I testified to the best of my abilities.

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, she says she co-operated, but she does not remember talking to the Prime Minister's right hand. She broke the rules. She interfered in this project, a project that should never have been approved, was pushed, and the taxpayers were out \$1 million because it was given to Conservative allies.

It was not in the interests of the public. It was in the interests of Nigel Wright and this Prime Minister. She took a fund that was meant to help disabled people and turned it into a pork barrel trough.

Why will she not at least have the decency to stand up and apologize?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not true at all.

I always believed that this project to improve access for people with disabilities was valid and in the public interest.

Neither I nor my family nor my friends had any personal stake in this. What is more, I have never met Rabbi Mendelsohn.

[English]

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Prime Minister and the Conservatives are playing politics with public money. In my own riding in a tweet from former Conservative Senator Patrick Brazeau, it is being alleged that the Minister of Public Works pulled funding from the Jean Bosco Centre in Maniwaki because “The NDP won the election”.

Let me repeat the question from my constituents. How can the Prime Minister endorse such unacceptable and unethical behaviour from the minister and the cabinet?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an external and internal assessment showed that the Centre Jean Bosco did not merit a grant of this nature. The NDP, of course, would fund anything even if there are objective assessments that demonstrate that the recipient was not meriting the dollars in question.

It is no wonder that the NDP and the Liberals would have to raise taxes. They would fund absolutely every request, even those that do not qualify.

[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Jean Bosco centre provides essential services to the people of Maniwaki.

According to former Conservative senator Patrick Brazeau, the Conservatives broke their promise to fund this centre because Minister Cannon was defeated in the last election. Again according to Mr. Brazeau, the former public works minister and even Nigel Wright were involved in this decision.

Does the Prime Minister find it acceptable that the people of Maniwaki are being punished?

• (1440)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr.

Speaker, internal and external assessments determined that the organization in question was not eligible for the requested subsidy, regardless of the lobbying done by Patrick Brazeau.

We respect the taxpayers' money. We control spending so we can keep taxes low, reduce them and balance the budget.

This is another example of why the NDP and the Liberals will have to raise taxes because they spend money irresponsibly. We will prevent them from doing so.

[English]

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Senator Wallin claimed to be living in Saskatchewan, but even her own staff say she lived in Toronto. It was so obvious that charging the Senate for her trips home was fraudulent that Conservative senators took her aside to warn her about it. About 93% of the senator's trips included time in Toronto.

Given how obvious this fraud was, why did the Prime Minister stand up in this place and claim her expenses were no different than those of other western senators?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as members know, an independent audit found that Senator Wallin claimed inappropriate expenses. As a result, we hope that she will face the full extent of the law for that.

At the same time, I hope that the member opposite will encourage her leader to cut a cheque for \$600,000. That is the amount that the Leader of the Opposition and the House Leader over there owe for inappropriate mailings.

The total bill is \$2.7 million to the taxpayers of Canada. I certainly hope that the member will get on top of the situation with her leader and the others who owe that money.

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are fed up with this culture of cronyism and patronage, where friends of the Conservative regime gleefully raid the cookie jar.

Conservative Senator Pamela Wallin spent all of her time fundraising for the Conservatives and then expected taxpayers to pick up the tab for her travel expenses. She was forced to pay back \$150,000, and there are still 150 invoices that the RCMP considers suspicious.

Why did the Prime Minister turn a blind eye to these abuses?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, an independent audit found that Ms. Wallin claimed inappropriate expenses.

[English]

As a result, we hope that Ms. Wallin will face the full extent of the law for doing that.

Oral Questions

At the same time, this member, I understand, personally owes \$15,161. The office that she represents, the whip's office, owes \$35,633.

I hope that she will find the time to make those two cheques out to the taxpayers of Canada, so that they are not left on the hook for those illegal NDP expenses.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, things are not going well at all for the Conservatives.

Allow me to summarize. The subpoenas are piling up on the Prime Minister's doorstep in the Mike Duffy affair, the former public works minister has been found guilty of patronage and conflict of interest because she did the Prime Minister's dirty work, the RCMP is investigating 150 suspicious invoices from Pamela Wallin, and to top it all off, now we learn that the Conservatives are punishing the people of Maniwaki because they did not vote for Lawrence Cannon.

What happened to the Conservatives' promise to clean up Ottawa? Why are the Conservatives starting to look more and more like Liberals?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, talk about not going very well. This particular member owes the taxpayers of Canada over \$122,000 for inappropriate mailings and office expenses.

I know that in every chequebook there are about 30 cheques. He has written 29 of those cheques out to the separatist party in Quebec. If he would just make the last cheque payable to the people of Canada for \$122,122, he could clear up that debt. Again, that is \$122,122.

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when arranging to cover up for Mike Duffy, Nigel Wright said, "We are good to go from the PM". Soon after, \$90,000 was paid from Wright to Duffy.

When the then human resources minister spoke to that same Nigel Wright about a project that had failed badly against all others, but was good for the Conservative Party, Nigel Wright said the PM told him to "sort it out".

Soon after, this project was approved for more than \$1 million. Just like Duffy, this leads right to the Prime Minister. How can he defend this corruption?

• (1445)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should get her facts straight.

I have always believed that this was a worthwhile project in the public interest, and in fact neither I nor any of my family or friends had any personal interest in this matter.

Far from being friends with Rabbi Mendelsohn, we have never even met. The Commissioner recognized that.

When the hon. member talks about corruption, she should remember that her government disappeared with \$40 million of taxpayers' money that has never been recovered.

[*Translation*]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister remains silent and refuses to take a stand against the racist comments made by the member for New Brunswick Southwest about a week ago. This is a matter of leadership. The Prime Minister needs to clearly state that those comments were unacceptable and apologize on behalf of his caucus. When will he do that?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said a few days ago, the member immediately realized that his comments were unacceptable and apologized for them.

[*English*]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two Conservative MPs, the members for Calgary East and Calgary Northeast, have both used very strong language to denounce these racist remarks.

We also know from a leaked briefing note that the Conservatives are super-sensitive to their old anti-immigration Reform Party base.

The only explanation for the Prime Minister's silence is that he has given in to these racist sentiments within his own party. How else can the Prime Minister justify his silence?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the member immediately recognized that his comments were unacceptable and he has apologized.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister's appearance at committee yesterday confirmed what Canadians already suspected: Bill C-51 is a dangerous piece of legislation that lacks proper safeguards. The Privacy Commissioner has sounded the alarm, saying that the bill is unprecedented and excessive, with seriously deficient privacy safeguards, his words.

Instead of reassuring Canadians by agreeing to a full parliamentary review of this bill and to stronger oversight, the minister yesterday offered nothing more than overheated and inappropriate rhetoric.

Why is the minister refusing to acknowledge the simple truth that more powers need more oversight?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do agree that more power requires more oversight, and that is why in Bill C-51 there is embedded not only more judicial oversight, but also more review bodies. I really wonder why New Democrats, if they are so keen on keeping an eye on our intelligence community, are not supporting Bill C-51.

However, I would argue that Canadians are keen on keeping an eye on those who are threatening us, and that is why I urge New Democrats to support Bill C-51.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, even those who work in our intelligence agencies are concerned that Bill C-51 is too broad in scope.

The former director of CSIS and chair of the Security Intelligence Review Committee is criticizing the lack of oversight and lack of resources to keep these agencies in check.

Will the Conservatives listen to this call for caution and agree to amend Bill C-51 in order to ensure that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service respects our rights and our laws?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleague to refer to the review committee's report, which indicates that the committee believes that it has both the capacity and the expertise required.

This is an independent committee that has consistently done its job and fulfils its role without any political interference. For 30 years, the committee has been issuing a security certificate that confirms and attests that the operations of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service meet Canadian requirements. The director general once again confirmed that he had all the resources necessary to fulfill his mandate.

Why are the New Democrats opposed to being better equipped to confront the terrorist threat—

• (1450)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Gatineau.

[English]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): More hot air than action from the government on public safety, Mr. Speaker, and today we have yet another example.

The RCMP criminal database is still seriously backlogged, six years after the Auditor General sounded the alarm.

We are talking about critical information that police rely on, like criminal records not being entered into the database for two years.

This is putting police and Canadians at risk. How could the minister allow this dangerous situation to continue?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, access to accurate and up-to-date criminal records information is critical for law enforcement across Canada.

The real question is this. Where was the NDP when this government invested \$180 million to develop a new, fully automated and electronic criminal records management system at the RCMP? Is it that the NDP is still in the dinosaur age, when we are now moving from a paper era to an electronic era?

We are working with our provinces, with courtrooms, and also with municipal police to have a successful transition—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Gatineau.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a nice machine, but it takes somebody to input the data.

[Translation]

The Canadian Police Association believes that the RCMP's lack of resources is threatening Canadians' safety. It currently takes two years to update criminal records. The Conservatives' incompetence means that our police officers have to work with an outdated database. They are being asked to fight terrorists and criminals with one hand tied behind their backs.

Will the minister finally do something about this dangerous situation in order to protect our police officers and Canadians?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important for those involved in law enforcement—whether police, prosecutors or judges—to have access to accurate and up-to-date criminal records information.

Why did the NDP oppose our \$180 million investment in the information system to move the records from the paper era into the electronic era? We are working with police forces and the provinces. Canada is a partner, we are at the table and we will continue to ensure that this model is efficient and modern.

* * *

*[English]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Mr. Ted Opatz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning there were reports that ISIL is on the verge of retreat. Those reports say that the Iraqi security forces and allied Shiite militias have now seized large parts of Tikrit and as a consequence of that bold action ISIL fighters are beginning to retreat.

Could the Minister of National Defence kindly provide an update to this House as to the current situation?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ISIL of course constitutes a threat to global security, including that of Canada. This is a genocidal terrorist organization that has explicitly targeted Canada on several occasions and that must be opposed. That is why I am pleased to report that this past Monday our CF-18 Hornets successfully struck a series of ISIL staging areas and fighting positions west of Kirkuk using precision-guided munitions. On Sunday, the RCAF successfully struck two ISIL ammunition caches southeast of Haditha.

Our air strikes are targeting heavy weapons, vehicles, fighting positions, tactical units and buildings used by ISIL throughout Iraq. We are tremendously proud of the men and women of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

*Oral Questions***REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the regional economic development agencies play a critical role across the country. They help small business and support our communities in diversifying. However, under the Conservatives, money approved by Parliament for regional economic development in the west has been left unspent. The Conservatives allowed nearly \$70 million to be unspent over four years. This is money that our communities badly need.

When will the Conservatives commit to diversified economic development and stop taking the west for granted?

• (1455)

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the opportunity to correct her claims. In fact, our government has a very strong track record of supporting western economic diversification, including things like supporting renewable power. We had a partnership with the First Nations Power Authority of Saskatchewan, for example.

In opposition, the NDP has consistently opposed the growth of the western economy through things like a carbon tax, opposing the development of the energy sector.

Certainly, when we look at funding status we would ask the New Democrats to pay the \$2.7 million back.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the public accounts are clear. The Conservatives are failing to spend millions budgeted for economic diversification. It is bad enough that the government has, since 2010, reduced by half the dollars committed to diversifying western Canada's economy. Over the past four years it also underspent its diversification budget by almost \$70 million, this in the face of rejections of applications by our promising renewable energy sector.

Why is the minister passing up the opportunity to create real economic diversification and jobs for western Canadians?

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, after coming into this portfolio, I introduced a merit-based system for the selection of applications. It is a call for proposals program that has seen excellent proposals being funded in five key priority areas, including innovation. One of these projects included a test site for carbon capture and storage technologies in Alberta, which would see the diversification of our economy by using the strength of our primary industry.

Rather than denigrate our economy, I would ask the NDP to stand with us in these measures, which support growth for all Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are worried about the derailments of oil tankers. The number of cars transporting oil is increasing exponentially, and since the Lac-Mégantic tragedy both the Transportation Safety Board of

Canada and the Auditor General have criticized the government for its lack of oversight.

What was the government's response? It hired one more inspector. That is the only additional rail safety inspector hired since 2013. Does the minister think that that is enough?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the actual numbers of rail safety inspectors are up by 10%, and the numbers of dangerous goods inspectors are up by over 85%.

That being said, I would like to inform that House that today, my officials at Transport Canada have provided an information update online with respect to the new car standard that they are looking at, which increases what we have been working on with respect to tank car and containment here in the country. I invite the hon. members to take a look at it.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is still an oversight issue. Northern Ontario has now been affected by three train wrecks in less than a month. Communities are concerned for their safety, and the Conservatives' proposed disaster compensation fund falls far short of what is needed.

A U.S. government study predicts that the financial toll of a major accident could be as much as \$6 billion. Transport Canada has its own analysis, but the government is keeping it secret.

Will the minister make this risk analysis public so that we can ensure that our communities are protected?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk about the safe and accountable rail act, which our government introduced last week. I certainly do hope that the opposition members will support it full-throated because of the great things it would do. For example, it would make sure that polluters do pay in the case of an untimely accident with respect to rail.

Specifically, it is important to note that it is a very comprehensive regime, with \$1 billion in liability insurance backed up by a \$250-million compensation fund paid by shippers and all backstopped by being able to go out and charge railroads, should it be in excess of that.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous government always ran a trade surplus while the current government has 49 months of a trade deficit. It is also weak on jobs, both in quantity and quality.

When CIBC reported that reality, the finance minister simply trashed it. CIBC is a sham, he said. However, it is not just CIBC. The same jobs analysis came from TD Bank, the Bank of Canada, the OECD, Morgan Stanley, York University, the PBO and many others.

Oral Questions

Are they all lying? Are all of them a sham?

• (1500)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to disappoint the hon. member, but what the Parliamentary Budget Officer actually said is that this government has cut taxes by \$3,400 for the average family, with a disproportionate amount of that money going to low- and middle-income families. Those lower taxes have helped create 1.2 million net new jobs, 80% of them full-time, 80% of them in the private sector and two-thirds in high-paying industries.

The Liberal one-point plan for the economy is to raise taxes on families and job creators. We will not let them.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a threadbare government in abject denial. It has increased taxes in each of its last five budgets. It has the worst growth record in eight decades. Job creation is only half of what the previous government achieved. Job quality is the worst in 25 years. One third of those soon retiring have no savings. Consumer debt is the highest ever. Federal debt has grown by nearly \$5,000 for every man, woman and child in the country.

Does the minister not understand that a big majority of Canadians want something new, different and better than this?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the kind of question—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The member has asked a question. I am sure he is quite keen to hear the answer.

The hon. Minister of Employment and Social Development.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the kind of question that we would expect from a party whose leader thinks budgets will just balance themselves.

Here are the facts. Income taxes are down by 10% and after-tax incomes are up by 10%. In fact, they are up by 14% for the lowest-income families. We have lowered taxes by \$3,400 for the average family of four, we have balanced the budget, and we have the lowest debt by far as a share of our economy of any of the G7 economies. We are going to continue with our economic action plan because it is working.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the processing time for sponsorship applications of spouses living in Canada is now 25 months. That is 25 months during which thousands of young Canadian families must live with insecurity and uncertainty as they wait for an answer.

The minister told us that the wait times would go down, but the opposite is happening. The times continue to increase.

What is the problem? Is it a lack of resources? Are they indifferent to the suffering of these families? Is the minister prepared to admit that there is a problem? Will the minister finally reduce these processing times?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is certainly very proud of its record regarding the reforms made to all its immigration programs over the last nine years.

We achieved the highest immigration rates in Canadian history, and that includes family reunification. I am very sorry that the hon. member does not realize that. Furthermore, at the end of last year we announced yet another new reform, which is a pilot project to provide work permits to sponsored spouses. We have already issued thousands of such work permits this year. We will continue working on reforming our immigration system.

* * *

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, regional airports in Quebec like the Trois-Rivières airport generate over \$3 billion in economic activity.

The Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec wants the government to invest in regional airports to turn them into real engines of economic development. Unfortunately, our airport facilities have been underfunded for years under the Liberals and Conservatives.

Will the minister finally do something to support economic development in the regions of Quebec?

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, Canada's current government has been helping airports across Canada, including in Quebec, for a long time now. Airports are tools for economic development, but we have to work with the partners.

Canada Economic Development has put forward a program to help extend a number of runways. That will continue to be done in Quebec. That being said, we are working with associations and organizations. We will not replace the boards of local airports, but we will work with them.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently the Minister of International Trade and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration welcomed China's long-term, multiple-entry visas for Canadians.

Oral Questions

Can the Minister of International Trade share with the House how this significant announcement will benefit all Canadians, from tourists and business people to those visiting their families in China?

• (1505)

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank the member for Vancouver South for the critical role she played in securing 10-year multiple-entry visas from China. These visas will make it easier for business people, family members, and tourists to travel to China. They will further strengthen our robust trade and investment relationship and cement our strong people-to-people ties with our second-largest trading partner.

Canadians know that this government's priority is to reduce costs, cut red tape and make it easier for Canadian small and medium-sized companies to increase exports and grow their businesses.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those were nice words from the trade minister, but in January Canada posted a walloping \$2.5 billion trade deficit, the second-highest in our history. Our dismal trade performance is especially worrying given the weakness of the dollar, usually a boon to exporters, and the economic rebound in the United States, our largest foreign market. The government is very good at throwing \$100,000 parties to announce unfinished trade deals, but it is ignoring this worrying erosion of our exporting muscle.

When will the government finally table a budget with a plan to reverse this worrying decline?

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is quite wrong. In fact, in 2014, Canada posted a trade surplus of nearly \$5 billion, with exports up 11% from the previous year. Our pro-export plan is working, and we will continue to promote the interests of our exporters, investors and manufacturers.

What is more, our government's low-tax plan has resulted in the creation of 1.2 million new jobs in Canada. This is a record we are proud of. These jobs are overwhelmingly full-time private sector jobs in high-wage industries.

Under the leadership of our Prime Minister, our government remains focused on creating—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Air Canada employees at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Airport are upset about being asked to work every day with a baggage scanner that operates only in English. This is despite the fact that the Commissioner of Official Languages has been clear: Air Canada employees have the right to work in the official language of their choice. This is by no means the first time that Air Canada has violated the rights of francophones.

Does the minister responsible for official languages think that is acceptable?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, our government is very proud of its record on official languages. They are our country's national languages, and we have invested a record \$1.1 billion across 14 departments, which are managing their files properly. I therefore suggest that my colleague contact the appropriate department directly.

* * *

[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been clear. They want their government to make decisions that will lead to more choice, lower prices and better service in the wireless sector. For new wireless companies to be able to compete and provide choice to Canadians, spectrum is essential.

Could the Minister of Industry please update the House on how last week's AWS-3 spectrum auction will deliver more choice for consumers in the wireless market?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as everything in our lives from academic pursuits to our digital economy continues to grow, the demand for wireless spectrum is only going to continue to be a demand for Canadians.

Canadians want the latest and best technology, including fast download speeds, in all areas of the country. Our spectrum policy has resulted in more spectrum being put into the hands of the marketplace to benefit consumers than has happened with any government before in Canada's history.

Better than that, when we formed government, less than 2% of all wireless spectrum was in the hands of wireless service providers other than the big three. Now more than a quarter of all wireless spectrum is going to be in the hands of competitors, which will drive down prices and create more choice for Canadian consumers. It is a big win for Canadians.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first Canada Post eliminated home delivery without consulting Canadians. Now it is sending letters to people in St. John's notifying them that they will soon have community mailboxes right in front of their homes on city easements. They did this without consulting residents or getting the approval of the City of St. John's.

How can the minister allow Canada Post to install these mailboxes so close to people's homes and properties without permission?

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1510)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Canada Post is facing a serious issue with respect to its ability to be self-sustaining. As a result, it has developed a five-point plan. One of these points is to make sure that we move to community mailboxes.

In siting these mailboxes, Canada Post must work with the communities and it must consult with Canadians. It consulted with Canadians before it introduced the five-point plan and it should consult with Canadians now as it moves forward in siting these community mailboxes.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the government likes to brag about being there for families by lowering taxes, but it is neglecting families who have a child with an intellectual disability.

Families in my riding who are in that situation have pointed out to me that the CRA regulations governing tax credits and deductions were drafted without taking into account the condition of people with intellectual disabilities. For instance, of the 117 eligible medical expenses listed by CRA, only four apply to individuals with autism. As for the disability tax credit, the eligible expenses do not really apply to their situation.

When will the government finally recognize the complexity of intellectual disabilities and cover the real needs of those families?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we are working to improve the quality of life of those with disabilities. That is why we created the fund so that families can save money for their disabled child's future. That is also why we created flexible programs like the child benefit so that parents with a disabled child can use it as they see fit.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency László Trócsányi, Minister of Justice of Hungary.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also like to draw the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of two of the finalists for the 2015 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing, Joseph Heath and John Ralston Saul.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, revised copies of the 2012-13 annual report on implementation of the Westbank First Nation Self-Government Agreement and the 2012-13 Tsawwassen First Nation annual implementation report.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 29 petitions.

* * *

LIFE MEANS LIFE ACT

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-53, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

* * *

SUPPORTING SMALL BREWERS ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-657, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (small brewery tax credit).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today a bill to amend the Income Tax Act, small brewery tax credit.

Currently, microbreweries account for 6% of the overall beer market share in Canada, a number that is estimated to triple in the coming years. The bill would effectively provide a tax credit for Canadian brewers who brewed less than 15,001 hectolitres in a year. It would also be an automatic tax credit for brewers producing less than 5,000 hectolitres annually and the formula specific to those brewing between 5,001 and 15,001 hectolitres.

Routine Proceedings

The New Democrats recognize the importance of taking immediate action to help those breweries thrive. The industry is steadily growing in my riding, with Walkerville Brewery, BREW, Motor Craft Ales, Craft Heads Brewing Company, and soon Rock Bottom. It is vital that we help these small businesses grow and expand for the future. The bill will do just that. What is good for the breweries will result in reinvestment in our local communities through jobs, training and revenues to drive the Canadian economy for years to come.

I would like to thank my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley for his work on the bill as well.

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

* * *

• (1515)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask for unanimous consent for the adoption of the committee report.

On January 29, 2014, my private member's motion on electronic petitions, Motion No. 428, was adopted by a narrow margin in the House. The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has since studied the matter and is unanimously recommending the right of petitioning be expanded through the establishment of an electronic petition process.

As someone who has worked for decades to improve Canadian democracy, I am very pleased that we in the House have been able to set aside partisan differences to make this change.

For the process to be established by the beginning of the 42nd Parliament, there have been consultations among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following. I move that the 33rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House on Thursday, February 26, be concurred in.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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

That the House do now proceed to the orders of the day.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1555)

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

(Division No. 346)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Barlow	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bezan	Blaney
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Dykstra	Eglinski
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Nicholson	Norlock
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Perkins	Poillievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea

Government Orders

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

YUKON AND NUNAVUT REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT

BILL S-6—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC) moved:

That, in relation to Bill S-6, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and the Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act, not more than one further sitting day 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 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 or amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67(1), there will now be a 30-minute question period. I would ask members to keep their questions or comments to about a minute and ministerial answers to a similar length of time.

The hon. opposition House leader.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): It has been 90 times, Mr. Speaker. This is the 90th time for closure and time allocation. This is the worst record in Canadian parliamentary history by far. The current Conservative government shows a marked intolerance of debate and discussion.

What is really bizarre about this is that we are talking about a bill that has not even gone for its first round of debate. Only eight members of Parliament have even been able to speak on the bill. We have the government moving time allocation for the 90th time, when the bill has not even received proper scrutiny.

As members know, the government has another very poor record, which is for the most pieces of legislation rejected by the courts in Canadian history.

When we combine the two, the Conservatives' intolerance of debate and the fact that often they put forward legislation that has not been properly vetted or properly written, we can see that we have yet another case when it is very clear that the bill before us may well be challenged in the courts.

Just two weeks ago, the last piece of legislation the Conservatives forced through the House, Bill C-15, was rejected by the courts. There is now a court injunction.

We are seeing with the bill on the Yukon a growing tide of reaction from people in the Yukon territory who are saying that they are very concerned about the bill, that it deserves appropriate scrutiny, and that there has not been appropriate consultation. In fact, the Coalition of Yukon First Nations has now threatened court action for another injunction.

Shiple
Smith
Sorenson
Strahl
Tilson
Trost
Truppe
Valcourt
Van Loan
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer— 141

Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Sweet
Toet
Trottier
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Adams
Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélanger
Bennett
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Christopherson
Comartin
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubourg
Dusseau
Eyking
Freeland
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Julian
Lapointe
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Perreault
Plamondon
Rafferty
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Tremblay
Turnel
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Allen (Welland)
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Boutin-Sweet
Brison
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Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Cleary
Côté
Cuzner
Day
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Foote
Garneau
Genest
Giguère
Goodale
Grogulé
Harris (St. John's East)
Jones
Lamoureux
Latendresse
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Péclet
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
St-Denis
Sullivan
Trudeau
Valeriote

Government Orders

Is that not the reason the Conservatives are forcing through, for the 90th time, closure and time allocation? Is it because they know the bill is increasingly controversial?

• (1600)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member complains about this being the 90th time. Well, that is about the number of times his party has stood up with exactly the same reasons. Every time, it is what they complain about, but he cannot bluff his way around this one.

This is not a bill about the Yukon only. It is about the regulatory system in the north, which affects, in this instance, both the Yukon and Nunavut.

For the information of the hon. member who complains about the bill not having been looked at by enough people, this is a bill that comes from the Senate. It has been before the senators. A host of witnesses have appeared before the Senate committee—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. We only have 30 minutes. I am sure the hon. minister would like to finish up, and then we will go to the next question.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that in fact, a host of witnesses—from the Premier of the Yukon to representatives from every sector of industry and the first nations—have already appeared, commented and shared their point of view on the bill in question.

[*English*]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are just sitting in the corner here sort of amazed at what is being said about the hearings that took place in the Senate. Those same senators made amendments to Bill C-377, a bill that attacked organized labour. They did not pay any attention to them. Why the difference now?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, what he says in that corner is in that corner, all right.

The truth of the matter is that Bill S-6, the Yukon and Nunavut regulatory improvement act, is the final legislative step in the government action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes. This bill responds to years and years of calls for less duplication and a less cumbersome, uncertain review process to evaluate projects, one that encourages development, investment, and job creation in the north, and for that matter, in all of Canada.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here we are again with the government shutting down democracy, for the 90th time. In this case, it serves to silence the voices of first nation peoples in the Yukon.

As Grand Chief Ruth Massie pointed out, this whole process attacks the integrity of their constitutionally protected agreements, and Yukon first nations will stand by their agreements, even if it means going to court. She said, “They give us no choice. We did not sign our agreements to implement them in the courts, but we will protect them”.

It is a disgrace that the current Conservative government is not only shutting down debate but is seeking to silence the voices of Grand Chief Massie and the first nations that are standing up for their rights and have been part of developing the YESSA agreement.

We will stand here in solidarity with them, sharing their voices and their words. We will fight back on this terrible piece of legislation.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: That is nonsense, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that the Conservative member for Yukon has been pleading with the socialists in neckties to allow the committee to travel to Yukon. We hope that they will abide by the wish of the Conservative member of Parliament for Yukon and allow the committee to travel so that first nations can indeed be heard in the Yukon and so Yukoners have a chance to be consulted and give their points of view on this piece of legislation.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, since he served in the cabinet of previous Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, how the Progressive Conservatives ever managed to get anything done, since they hardly ever used closure.

How was it possible that democracy was allowed in the House of Commons in the Progressive Conservative government and is no longer allowed in his administration?

• (1605)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, the opposition members call this the shutting down of democracy. They sit in the House of Commons and make their case, and this is not democracy? To me it is democracy, but democracy is also about elected members working for the welfare of Canada and the betterment of Canadians.

We are a government that does not consider the north just a trophy. We have decided that northerners will have their place in Canada. The northern strategy is about enabling northerners to be full Canadians, and we will keep doing this.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my role as parliamentary secretary, I have had the opportunity to meet with people at the Association for Mineral Exploration B.C. in Vancouver as well as with the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada.

There is a new report out that shows that Yukon has actually gone from the best place in the world to conduct resource development mining to the ninth over the last number of years, because it is falling behind when it comes to its regulatory regime.

I am wondering if the minister can talk about the need to bring in regulatory reform so that Yukon, which used to lead the way with its mining development regime, can catch up now. I would ask him to talk about that.

Government Orders

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a very important point. In fact, from 2011 to 2013, Yukon was rated the single most desirable place in the world for mining companies to conduct business. As the parliamentary secretary pointed out, the most recent report, however, shows that Yukon has actually fallen to ninth place overall. The leaders, communities, and workers in the Yukon are concerned. They see that the regulatory regime in the Northwest Territories has been changed to be in line with the one south of 60, and this is exactly what this would do for Yukon and Nunavut.

It is really important and urgent that we pass this legislation so that Yukoners and the people in Nunavut can get the same benefits as other jurisdictions in the north.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we just got the truth about why this bill is being rushed through. It was rushed through the Senate, and it is being rushed through the House. It is because the only voice that is being heard by the government is the mining associations'.

What is absolutely outrageous is that the government would limit debate on this bill when, in fact, the very issues we wish to raise are the ones expressed by Yukoners and the Yukon first nations themselves. Ruth Massie, the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations, is vociferously opposed to this legislation. Why? It is for two reasons. First, it is substantively eroding their constitutionally entrenched umbrella final agreement and all first nation final agreements that were negotiated between the territories, the federal government, and the first nations. Second, the government is obligated by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Constitution to consult, consider, and accommodate, and it has absolutely refused to hear the concerns of the Council of Yukon First Nations.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, this is totally false. The bill was part of a rigorous consultation process with first nations, territorial governments, and industry representatives. Drafts of legislative proposals were shared with stakeholders on several occasions. Comments received on the drafts were carefully considered, and where appropriate, were incorporated in the proposed text—

• (1610)

Mr. Pat Martin: It serves the lobbyists who wrote it.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: If he would keep quiet, maybe I could get a few words in. The least people can do is be polite. Has he not learned any manners yet?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. When another member has been recognized and has the floor, it is incumbent on all other hon. members to hold their comments—

Mr. Pat Martin: I am being denied the right to speak on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The member for Winnipeg Centre will come to order.

The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development will finish this up, and then we will go to the next question.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, most of these amendments stem from the five-year review of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act, which occurred from 2008 to 2012. These people on the other side say that this would completely change the landscape. Most, if not three-quarters or 98%, of these changes were agreed to by the first nations.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first nations, other stakeholders, and even individuals like Larry Bagnell, the former member of Parliament, have been very clear that the Conservative government has not done any real consultation. Real consultation means listening, and the minister needs to do just that. He needs to start listening to the needs of our northern communities.

The issue before us today is yet again about time allocation, which is closure. It is the lack of respect the Prime Minister has for democracy in the chamber. It is the 90th time the Conservatives have introduced limitations on members of Parliament. Through the House, we represent constituents back in our home ridings.

My question is for either the minister or the government House leader. Can they justify why they continue to deny MPs the opportunity to represent their constituents? Why does the government continue to not listen to what northerners have to say about important pieces of legislation?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, we are not reinventing the wheel here. What we are doing is updating the regulatory regime in the north so that it is in conformity with that south of 60 to create a level playing field for these communities and territories. Why should they be penalized, because they live in the north, with a regulatory system that prevents investment?

When we look at the construction season in the north, time is of the essence. The sooner they enjoy a regulatory system that is modern and efficient, the more chance they will have to get the investments that will create jobs for northerners.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people watching us today on CPAC can see quite clearly that the Conservatives are trying to muzzle us in our parliamentary work.

First they decided to hold a vote to prevent us from presenting petitions. We had some extremely important petitions to present. I have petitions from Development and Peace that I was unable to present today because the Conservatives put up roadblocks.

Second, the government moved a time allocation motion on a bill for the 90th time, which is preventing us from doing our parliamentary work. Frankly, this is deplorable behaviour by the Conservative government.

Government Orders

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, passing Bill S-6 is the final legislative step in the government's action plan to improve the regulatory regime in the north. This bill responds to calls made over many years to establish a review process to evaluate projects that is less cumbersome, duplicative and uncertain. This process will promote development while guaranteeing sound environmental management. That is the intended objective.

As I was saying earlier, I know that the NDP could not care less about whether or not people can work in the north, but it is important to us. Investments will create jobs, which in turn will improve the standard of living of northerners.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that the NDP and the Liberals both want to put a carbon tax on the north, a carbon tax on every part of Canada. They want fuel prices going up, heating prices going up, and everything going up because of this carbon tax.

Could the minister tell us if Bill S-6 would actually improve the environment? As well, would it include a carbon tax, or would we leave money in Canadians' pockets?

• (1615)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, not only would the bill improve the regulatory scheme in terms of investment and time efficiencies, but it would also better protect the environment.

The bill has provisions to increase protection of the environment, and I am very surprised that the NDP would oppose that.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard all sorts of rhetoric about what the bill would do, but this debate is on time allocation being imposed 90 times.

[*Translation*]

This is the 90th time.

My colleague from Alfred-Pellan asked why this government wanted to delay or stop the work of MPs, and the minister did not answer.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I will give him an answer.

It is because we doubt that the NDP can debate this bill expeditiously. As I said earlier, it is important that the regulatory regime in Yukon and Nunavut be updated. The figures support that; I am not making it up. Two years ago, Yukon was ranked second by investors from around the world, and today it is ranked ninth.

I know that economic development, creating jobs and improving the standard of living are not important to New Democrats, but they are to us. We hope that they will join with us and support this bill so that the north can benefit.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, let us hear the voices from Yukon:

The CYFN and Yukon First Nations assert that the federal government would breach its constitutional duty to uphold the honour of the Crown when it proceeded unilaterally with [these] amendments.

That is Mary Jane Jim, from a Yukon First Nation.

We have the *Yukon News* editorial:

A long list of people deserve raspberries for this needlessly shady behaviour. At the top of the naughty list are Senator Daniel Lang and [the Conservative member for Yukon], who are supposed to ensure that the interest of Yukoners are represented in Ottawa.

Shame on them. The official opposition NDP leader, Liz Hanson, said:

What we need, what is sorely missing, is a willingness to engage in an open and honest manner. We need a relationship built on dialogue and respect, rather than on lawsuits and secret negotiations.

Those are the voices of Yukon that the Conservatives are refusing to listen to. Why are they stifling the debate that Yukoners want to be engaged in?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member likes quotes, let me quote Premier Pasloski of Yukon, who told the standing committee:

...collectively, these amendments mark an important milestone as they are the culmination of years of hard work and meaningful consultation between all three levels of government...

Let us listen to Johnny Mike, the Minister of the Environment for Nunavut. He said that

This bill is an important step in creating an effective and modern regulatory regime for Nunavut.

[It] will contribute to the environmental protection and economic development of Nunavut.

That is what they oppose. I cannot understand it.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this discussion we are having. I think it is important that we see the bill move forward.

I had the privilege of serving as chair of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development for approximately three years, and it was one of the greatest privileges I have had.

One of the things we heard during some of the hearings was that there was some controversy surrounding the issue of the minister providing policy direction to the Yukon Environmental Socio-Economic Assessment Board under this new legislation. This would allow the minister to give that policy direction.

It is my understanding that other boards have these same provisions. I am wondering if the minister could articulate the circumstances under which the minister has given, or possibly former ministers have given, policy direction to these boards. Under what circumstances was this direction given?

• (1620)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question, because the policy direction issue is one of the specific points opposed by some first nations advocates in the Yukon in particular.

Government Orders

This exists in other legislation. It has been used before. We are not reinventing the wheel. The record will show that each time a federal minister has used this power with the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board in the Northwest Territories, where it exists, it has actually been to protect first nations rights. It has been used to ensure that the board carries out its functions and responsibilities in co-operation with the Akaitcho Dene First Nation and its pre-screening board. It has provided instruction to the board to ensure that it fulfills its obligations under the Deh Cho interim measures agreement. It has required that notification be provided to both the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Denesuline regarding licences and permits.

According to the act, these directions cannot affect a project under review and will be beneficial for first nations and everyone in the north.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is very discouraging to hear the Conservatives provide the sort of answers schoolchildren would provide. In fact, the answers they have been giving opposition members for the past 20 minutes are worse than the answers schoolchildren would provide.

We are asking to be able to talk about and explain things and participate in the debate. The Conservatives are cutting short the debate and saying something so terrible that I will not repeat it.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear a question.

Once again, for the benefit of the House, I would simply like to remind members that passing Bill S-6, the Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act, is the final legislative step in the government's action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes.

We know that the NDP has opposed all of these measures since the plan was announced. It is not surprising that it continues to want to obstruct the work of the House of Commons and prevent it from moving forward.

However, because we have a majority, we can pass this bill at second reading and send the committee directly to the Yukon to consult the people who live there.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister has opened the discussion on this. What is so apparent here is that the government, in wanting to bring limitation on the debate, will give us a remaining five minutes to try to be a voice for the people of the north. Instead of spending the time actually hearing from representatives of this place on behalf of the electorate, it is going to limit our time to five minutes.

Why is that serious? It is because the process for the bill is exactly the same failed process the government followed in similar legislation for the Northwest Territories. As a result, the Tlicho and the Sahtu, whom the minister mentioned, have the government in court for exactly the failed unilateral process it followed, which is unconstitutional.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I will prefer the judgment of the court on those issues and questions over the judgment of the

member. I respect the court, and since these matters are before the court, we will not comment on them.

In regard to the bill, which they want to delay, what they do not realize is they are delaying investment. They are delaying job creation in the north. Also, since as a government our priority is job creation and long-term prosperity, we are going to stick to our agenda and ensure that northerners get the benefit of this legislation.

• (1625)

Mr. John Barlow (Macleod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is being overlooked here is the impact the bill would have on the economy of Yukon and Nunavut. That is very important. We are talking about resource extraction and mining.

Our government has made it very clear that growth and creating jobs and long-term prosperity for the north are a top priority for us. The bill would have a very prominent role in guiding Yukon to its future success.

I wonder if the minister could talk a little about what the bill would do for the economic development of Yukon.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying again for the record that no government in Canadian history has ever done as much for Canada's north as ours. This legislation is further proof of this. It would create conditions to encourage investment, which would in turn lead to jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity for Yukoners and Nunavummiut alike.

Bill S-6 introduces timelines that would create consistency and predictability in environmental assessments and the issuance of water licences. This is a big plus for the north. I implore my colleagues on the other side to see the light.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Voltaire once said, "I may disagree with what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it."

My comment is to you, Mr. Speaker. Limiting the expression of members of this House and limiting the diversity of voices that could come during this debate is doing a grave injustice to our democracy. It is hurting the integrity of this House. I ask you to intervene in this to improve our democracy.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I thought you were going to offer him a copy of the Standing Orders so that he would realize that you are not here to answer questions.

The opposition members refuse to admit the very fact that if we let them stand up and talk away on this bill, the House will rise without the northern communities in question benefiting from the bill.

This bill must become law. We want to bring it to the north, go to the Yukon, have the people there give their input on the bill, let the committee do its job, consider the bill, make recommendations, and bring it back to the House.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): That will conclude the 30-minute period.

Before we put the question, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Churchill, Aboriginal Affairs; the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, Intergovernmental Relations.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

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

• (1710)

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

*(Division No. 347)***YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Barlow	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bezan	Blaney
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Egliniski	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear

Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Perkins	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Williamson
Wilks	Woodworth
Wong	Young (Vancouver South)
Yelich	Zimmer— 140
Yurdiga	

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Freeland	Garneau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Jones
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Latendresse	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse

Government Orders

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to its study of the subject matter of Bill S-6, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and the Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act, seven members of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development be authorized to travel to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, in the winter-spring of 2015, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the chief government whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed

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

Some hon. members: Agreed

(Motion agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Raynauld	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis	Stewart
Sullivan	Tremblay
Trudeau	Valeriote
Vaughan— 117	

PAIRED

Nil

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to order paper Questions Nos. 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 944, and 945, I wish to table, in both official languages, documents containing the government's responses to these questions.

* * *

[Translation]

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BARBARIC CULTURAL PRACTICES ACT

BILL S-7—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to second reading stage of Bill S-7, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

YUKON AND NUNAVUT REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT

The House resumed from December 4, 2014, consideration of the motion that Bill S-6, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and the Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Macleod.

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, I am pleased to speak to Bill S-6. In my role, I have had the privilege of meeting with first nations from Yukon, Inuit representatives from Nunavut, and members of industry from both territories. I am convinced the amendments in this legislation will be beneficial to all parties involved.

Our Conservative government has stood by Canada's north. Our northern strategy has increased funding for infrastructure, protected Canada's Arctic sovereignty and has ensured that we remain a world leader in northern science and technology. A large part of this strategy involves our work to improve northern regulatory regimes.

Government Orders

Improving the regulatory process in the north is something that our government has been accomplishing since it came to office. Improvements began through the Northern Jobs and Growth Act, continued in the Northwest Territories through the Northwest Territories Devolution Act, and will be completed by strengthening regimes in Yukon and Nunavut. Bill S-6 would strengthen these regimes by making effective regulatory framework strong, effective, efficient and predictable.

Let me quote the hon. Darrell Pasloski, Premier of the Yukon. He said:

The amended legislation will be more consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions and will put Yukon in a stronger competitive position to achieve more economic growth, jobs and prosperity for all Yukoners.

The changes proposed in the bill will encourage resource development and ensure sound environmental stewardship. In the case of Yukon, amendments to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act, commonly referred to as YESAA, would introduce beginning-to-end timelines for environmental assessments. This would align the territory's regime with other federal environmental assessment laws across the north and in the rest of Canada. Regulations under YESAA already set out certain time limits for decision making, and Bill S-6 would enshrine these in legislation.

Legislated time limits are an effective way to provide predictability and certainty for proponents, regulators, governments and first nations, without sacrificing the integrity of the evaluation process, and safeguarding environmental protection. I would like to note that this predictability and certainty is something that is desperately needed in Yukon right now.

The Fraser Institute recently published its annual report which ranks different jurisdictions by how desirable they are as a destination for mining investment. In 2011-12, as well as 2012-13, Yukon was rated as the single most attractive jurisdiction for investment in the world. In the years since, Yukon's ranking has fallen to ninth place. This is a result of the fact that other jurisdictions have caught up to and surpassed Yukon, once a world leader in terms of regulatory efficiency.

For a territory that receives the majority of its revenue from resource development, this drop has had a significant impact, and our government is determined to ensure that Yukon continues to set global standards with respect to the mining industry.

Bill S-6 contains provisions that will introduce time limits to improve proponent and investor confidence, provide consistency and transparency to the process, and gain efficiency at all stages of the process. We know from other jurisdictions that these are vital pieces of an effective regulatory regime and that they will help drive economic development in Yukon.

David Morrison, the president and CEO of the Yukon Energy Corporation agrees. According to him:

Having screening processes that don't have defined timelines, and strictly defined timelines, makes it very difficult for people who are investing millions and hundreds of millions of dollars.

Ensuring timely decision making can have a significant impact on the well-being of northern communities. In a highly competitive global marketplace, businesses need assurance of when their projects

will move from approvals to the construction phase and not be delayed by unnecessary duplication of regulatory processes. Too many delays may make a proponent look elsewhere, which means a community or first nation could see an opportunity pass by.

The Senate Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources heard the same arguments last fall from industry and territorial government witnesses commenting on Bill S-6. For example, Samson Hartland, executive director of the Yukon Chamber of Mines described the introduction of time limits as:

—probably the most important aspect of this bill to our membership. The definitive beginning-to-end timelines create certainty and allow for consistency from coast to coast for proponents, regardless of where they are doing business — in the Yukon or N.W.T. It is so important for proponents to have consistency and regularity when dealing with and preparing for their project activities.

● (1715)

Bill S-6 is garnering such support for good reason. Without sacrificing the integrity of the process or protection of the environment, time limits enable all parties to predict how long a review process will take.

In addition to timelines, there are several other aspects of the bill that would improve the regulatory system and drive economic development in the Yukon.

The first is the implementation of the principle of one project, one assessment. If passed, Bill S-6 will ensure that a new assessment of an existing project will only be required if there had been a significant modification to the project as it was originally assessed. This will reduce duplication of work for proponents and evaluators, while retaining the integrity of the environmental assessment. This is the sort of practical approach that demonstrates our government is protecting Canada's environmental heritage, without resorting to a job-killing carbon tax, such as the NDP and Liberals want to impose on northerners.

Another proposed change to YESAA is the ability for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to provide policy direction to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. This power would help to reduce uncertainty and environmental assessment decision-making by ensuring that the government and the assessment boards would be on the same page.

It is important to underline, however, that this authority could not be used to influence a decision on a project or to restrict or expand the powers of the board. This power is provided for in both the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act as well as the Yukon Waters Act. In each case, the ministerial power has only ever been used to protect first nation rights.

Taken together, these improvements will create the certainty and predictability needed for responsible resource development projects to proceed.

Government Orders

Our government is committed to jobs, growth and long-term prosperity in the north. The legislation before the House today would play a large role in achieving these outcomes by simultaneously driving economic development and protecting Canada's environmental heritage. I urge all members from all parties to support this important initiative.

• (1720)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard loud and clear from the parliamentary secretary the perspective of the government on who should be making decisions about Yukon.

I had the privilege of being the first ever assistant deputy of natural resources in Yukon and I know the way Yukoners like to work. They like to work together with first nations and with other Yukoners.

There was a process going on, a five-year review of this statute, which was cut off unilaterally by the federal government. It threw out the issues and preferences of the first nations and brought in three amendments to which the first nations were totally opposed.

I have a simple question for the parliamentary secretary. Who should decide on resource development, environmental protection and socio-economic development in Yukon, Yukoners and Yukon first nations, as per the First Nation Final Agreements, or the southern-based Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, Bill S-6 completely respects the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement. The decision should be made by Yukoners, and that is what we are trying to do with this bill, and what the NDP is opposing.

The NDP members oppose the delegation of authority from Ottawa to Yukon. They are standing in opposition to that, because they believe Ottawa knows best, that we should keep the power away from northerners and not give them the same powers that other jurisdictions in Canada have.

This bill was developed in consultation with Yukoners and first nations. In fact, just on the few amendments that the member mentioned, the Government of Canada has reimbursed those first nations up to \$98,695 for those consultations that took place. Therefore, for the member to suggest that has not taken place, that we have not consulted with Yukoners, is patently false.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question for the member is an important one in this sense.

One of the stumbling blocks going forward over the last several decades in Canada with respect to aboriginal participation in large resource development projects has been the notion of equity participation. Aboriginal peoples, in my view, have a right to have a share of the equity in projects, not simply be the recipients of specific outcomes, be it income benefits or socio-economic benefits, but have full equity participation.

What precisely would the bill do to facilitate, encourage, make as an outcome for our aboriginal peoples in all the resource projects that are contemplated for that region full equity partners?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, one of the things I have heard as parliamentary secretary when I have been at either the Association for Mineral Exploration conference in British Columbia or the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada conference in Toronto is that mining is, proportionately, the number one employer of aboriginal Canadians in the country. It is an industry that employs aboriginal Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

As for the equity participation, those are agreements that need to be reached by first nations governments, proponents, and the territorial government. What this bill would do is bring certainty to the territory to ensure that Yukon has the same regulatory regime as the rest of Canada, which would ensure that investment continues to flow to Yukon as opposed to a withdrawal of that investment, because Yukon has failed to keep pace with the regulatory regimes in the rest of Canada.

The bill would encourage that economic development, which would benefit not only the Government of Yukon but first nations in Yukon as well.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I heard the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon first nations group asserting that the federal government would be in violation of its constitutional duty to uphold the honour of the Crown if it proceeded with these amendments to the YESAA legislation. This is according to a councillor with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

If the first nations were to bring a lawsuit and the delay that would incur, is there a plan B to deal with the delay that this litigation would cause?

• (1725)

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, it is impossible for the Government of Canada to predict what first nations are going to do, how they are going to react. Any individual or government, for that matter, certainly has the right, as the member has said, to bring an action in court. We believe this bill is fully compliant with the umbrella final agreements. All of the legal advice the government has received has said that.

We believe the bill is in the interest of first nations in Yukon. It is in the interest of Yukoners and in the interest of jobs and long-term prosperity for Yukon. That is why we believe it should be passed.

Mr. John Barlow (Macleod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing his time with me tonight.

No government in Canada's history has done as much for the north as ours. From regulatory improvement to safeguarding Arctic sovereignty, our Conservative government has stood by northerners. Bill S-6 is just the latest measure we have taken to ensure the true north remains strong and free. By driving economic development and encouraging jobs, growth and long-term prosperity, Bill S-6 would make sure that Yukon and Nunavut remain attractive places to live, work and invest long term.

Government Orders

Bill S-6 is only the most recent endeavour in our government's plan to improve the northern regulatory regimes. Like all the legislation passed to date under the action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes, Bill S-6 is designed to increase efficiency, clarity and certainty respecting the regulatory processes. At the same time, the act would strengthen environmental protection and enhance consultations with aboriginal people, reaffirming them in their role in this regulatory process.

Let me cite just a few examples to illustrate how Bill S-6 would achieve these objectives. I will start by noting that the act would implement the principle of one project, one assessment. Under the current version of the YESEAA all kinds of small, routine modifications to projects get caught up in time-consuming and costly reassessment processes.

During meetings held this fall by the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, senators heard complaints about this from numerous companies and industry associations. I would like to quote David Morrison, president and CEO of Yukon Energy Corporation from September 25, 2014. He said:

You might get a two-month delay in an assessment process that costs you a year from a construction point of view, because you have missed the construction window. Those things really add up. They add up significantly.

For years there have been calls for a less duplicative and cumbersome review process to evaluate these projects, one that encourages development while also ensuring sound environmental stewardship. This is exactly what Bill S-6 would do.

Consistent with other northern environmental legislation, the act would lead to more predictable and timely reviews, in part due to less duplication and reduce regulatory burden. Going forward, there would be no need for a reassessment, for renewal or modification to a project unless the decision body, or bodies, determine the project has undergone significant change from what was originally assessed.

By retaining the integrity of the initial environmental assessment, but reducing unnecessary duplication, we are protecting the northern environment without resorting to drastic measures, like the job-killing carbon tax the Liberals and NDP favour.

Another example is, Clynton Nauman, president and CEO, Alexco Resource Corp. also told the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, on September 30, 2014, that work was needed to ensure Yukon remains competitive with respect to investment in resource development. He said:

The current uncertainty has had a negative impact on our ability to efficiently plan and operate our business, and by extension, it impairs the competitiveness of Yukon as a jurisdiction to assert certainty in the mine development and production process.

The Fraser Institute's 2014 survey of mining companies confirms this. Since 2011-12, Yukon has fallen from being ranked as the most desirable jurisdiction in the world for mining corporations to invest in, to the ninth. Our government and Yukoners like Clynton Nauman know it is important for Yukon to return to this impressive standing. The measures contained in Bill S-6 would help Yukon regain its previous success.

These measures are essential for the people of Yukon to realize the territory's full potential. It would also meet the needs of investors,

developers and employers by providing a clear and predictable assessment process that would allow Yukon to remain competitive in a global marketplace.

As I mentioned earlier, to avoid duplication with respect to environmental assessments in the Yukon, Bill S6 would eliminate the need to reapply for water licences in Nunavut, unless there is a substantive change in the nature of the project. Substantive changes are modifications like diverting the course of a stream, increasing the size or changing the location of a tailings pond, or a large increase in the use of water. Again, similar to the YESEAA amendments found in Bill S-6, this provision would protect the environment without implementing a costly job-killing carbon tax.

● (1730)

Another way Bill S-6 would address the regulatory burden is by providing an extension to the terms of board members under YESAA. This was one of the jointly agreed upon recommendations in a five-year review of YESAA by the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Canada. This will increase predictability and certainty by ensuring that the assessment continues to function smoothly, even as its members transition onto the board.

A further example of how Bill S-6 would reduce duplication is evident in Nunavut. I am referring to amendments related to security arrangements to rectify the situation known as over bonding. Let me first explain briefly what this means and how it relates to posting securities. Securities are monies companies set aside to ensure that at the end of a development project, there are adequate funds to remediate the impact of any project on the surrounding environment. Under the Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act, securities for future remediation of resource development projects that use or impact the water in any way are paid or posted by companies. This money is held in trust by the federal government until the end of that project.

Where a project is wholly or partially on Inuit-owned land, the regional Inuit association can request that additional security be posted for the part of the development on its lands. In some cases, this has resulted in over bonding, meaning that a company is required to provide more security than would be required to remediate a project at its completion. This is a significant disincentive to development and places an undue burden on proponents.

Government Orders

Proposed amendments in Bill S-6 would allow the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to enter into agreements with Inuit landowners and proponents. These agreements would recommend the amount of security to be posted on a project situated partially or wholly on Inuit-owned land. When the Nunavut Water Board determined the amount of security required to be furnished by the proponent, it would have to take these agreements into consideration. The introduction of security arrangements to address over bonding would help unlock the economic potential of Nunavut by removing a disincentive to investment while ensuring sound environmental stewardship.

Because Bill S-6 would reduce regulatory duplication and the burden on Yukon and Nunavut, it is little wonder that Bill S-6 has earned widespread support among industry groups and northern governments. From the Yukon Chamber of Mines in the west to the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines in the east, from the Government of Nunavut to the Government of Yukon, we have heard both praise and calls to pass this legislation as quickly as possible.

We want northerners to have the ability to drive economic development in the north. Passing this bill would create jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity for the north. This is why I strongly urge all parties to heed this advice and vote with us to move this legislation forward.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's presentation just now. I understand that many in the Yukon, and Yukon first nations as well, are much opposed to this legislation, because it removes the kind of made-in-Yukon YESAA they had in the past. As I understand it, the amendments would allow the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to provide a binding policy direction to the environmental assessment board.

Mr. Speaker, through you, how does this increase the level of confidence we should have that this is truly for Yukon, Yukoners, and first nations, if the minister gets to tell them what to do?

• (1735)

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I think what the hon. member missed in my speech was that this is an agreement between the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon, and first nations. There is a consultation process to come to these types of agreements. The proposed amendments to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act would allow the minister, after consultation with the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, to give this binding agreement. However, it would be after consultation with the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, and those consultations would have to take place before these agreements were reached.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the importance of consultations that are required to take place going forward, and this is what he is implying. The Liberal caucus has been informed by stakeholders, both directly and indirectly, about the lack of genuine consultation with first nations and other stakeholders in the north.

Does the member not believe that prior to the legislation even coming to Ottawa, there should have been a more thorough and

robust consultation so that there was a sense that Ottawa was listening to what was being said up north from the people who would be most affected by this legislation?

There is a great deal of concern and a sense of frustration that the government is just not listening, let alone responding to the need for genuine consultation.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the question is coming from a member of the party whose leader, when he was doing his northern tour, did not even both to stop in Yukon. For him to give an opinion on consultation with Yukon I find quite disingenuous.

In saying there has not been consultation, he is absolutely incorrect. The changes in the bill were the culmination of a five-year review process. As my colleague mentioned earlier, \$200,000 was put aside to fund the consultations, and \$98,000 has been claimed by first nations as a result of those consultations.

I think there has been extensive dialogue between the Government of Canada and the first nations communities of Yukon, and I think that dialogue will continue.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I should point out with reference to consultation that a duly elected government in Yukon that is responsive to Yukoners is behind this particular measure.

Mining is a long-term investment. It requires due diligence in looking at the factors that would make for a stable investment or a worthwhile investment, so the regulatory environment is clearly very important.

The fact that Yukon is out of sync, if you will, with other jurisdictions right now in being able to have these types of important, straightforward, simple, single-window reviews is critical for them.

I think the member mentioned that Yukon is losing ground in terms of its desirability as an investment location for mining. I wonder if he could comment on that. Is it possible to quantify how much investment is either at risk or has been lost as a result of potential delay in getting to that regulatory environment?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly right. I think an issue that has been somewhat overlooked in this debate by the opposition is the impact that passing the bill will have on the economy of northerners.

As a matter of fact, I mentioned in my speech that the Yukon Chamber of Mines, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Chamber of Mines, the Government of Nunavut, and the Government of Yukon are all in support of the bill. They understand the importance to their economy and the fact that although Yukon was the number one jurisdiction in the world for mining investment in 2011-2012, it has now fallen down to number nine.

We have to take some very aggressive steps to get Yukon back to where it was before and regain that success as a resource extraction economy.

• (1740)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Churchill.

Government Orders

I would advise the member that she will only have five minutes of debate before the debate terminates.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what a shame it is that we in the opposition have only about five minutes to speak to a piece of legislation at second reading that is critical when it comes to a specific region in the country.

It is a crying shame that the people of Yukon cannot depend on their member of Parliament to bring forward opposing voices to Bill S-6. While we are honoured to do that, I want to point out that it is the Conservative government that is taking away time, time that we could use to share the voices of the people from Yukon, to share the voices of first nations in Yukon, and instead it has chosen to muzzle and silence them in this House.

It is clear that the people of Yukon have not given the mandate or the authority to the federal government to implement Bill S-6.

Bill S-6 will serve to dismantle YESAA which belongs to the people of Yukon, including first nations. It was developed by Yukoners and for Yukon. Yukoners, including first nations and industry, are now saying that they do not want or need the changes imposed on them by Bill S-6. They are actively campaigning against it in astonishing numbers.

In fact, contrary to the rhetoric we have heard in this House, we know that there have been no public consultations on Bill S-6 at any point by the federal government in Yukon.

It does not enjoy first nations consent. For this reason alone, it is incumbent upon the House not to pass this bill. It is unlawful for the federal government to impose regulations upon a regulatory body, such as the YESAA board without the consent of Yukon first nations.

Grand Chief Ruth Massie said:

This whole process attacks the integrity of our constitutionally protected agreements and Yukon First Nations will stand by their agreements even if it means going to court, they give us no choice. We did not sign our agreements to implement them in the courts but we will protect them.

This speaks to a broader agenda put forward by the government, which is to attack first nations' rights as a result of its failure of consultation and achieving consent, and instead pushing first nations to pursue costly litigation that in some cases is difficult for them to afford, a process that only makes money for federal government lawyers who choose to fight first nations in court.

The people of Yukon and first nations alike are baffled by the content of Bill S-6. Yes, YESAA recently underwent a five-year review through which recommendations were made. However, the four amendments that are the cause of concern appeared nowhere as recommendations in the five-year review. These four changes are contrary to the intent of the land claim agreement and undermine the neutrality of the YESAA process.

Once again, Grand Chief Ruth Massie said:

Yukon first nations have met with the Government of Canada, specifically [the] Minister... of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development of Canada have asked them to remove four problematic amendments proposed to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act legislation established in Chapter 11 of the Umbrella final agreement and each final land claim agreement of the eleven Yukon First Nations.

It is not only Yukon first nations that are opposed to Bill S-6, Yukoners have been coming out to public meetings and showing their opposition in public venues in a significant way. It is also industry and members of industry that have been clear in their opposition.

I would like to read into the record a quote from a letter sent by the CEO of the Casino Mining Corporation, Paul West-Sells:

On behalf of Casino Mining Corporation, I am putting forward our company's concerns regarding the fragility of intergovernmental relations in the Yukon surrounding Bill S-6 and the negative impact this is having on the territory's mineral industry. It is imperative for Casino that the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act has the broad support of all governments in order to ensure the confidence of both project proponents and Yukon Residents in the YESAA process and to facilitate investments in the territory.

So there we have it. I also want to make a final comment with regard to the Fraser Institute report that we keep hearing about. This has been proven to be a flawed report. In fact, the day it became public, the extent to which this report was flawed, the Fraser Institute itself removed its data collecting portion on its website.

● (1745)

Finally, this is about standing in opposition to a federal government that is seeking to silence the voices of northern Canadians and northern first nations in our country. I am proud to stand with the NDP. We are standing with Yukoners and Yukon first nations, and saying no to Bill S-6.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:45 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill 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.

● (1825)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 348)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Armstrong
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Boughen
 Breitreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Dreeschen
 Dykstra
 Falk
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Galipeau
 Glover
 Goldring
 Gosal
 Grewal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hoback
 James
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kent
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lebel
 Leung
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Miller
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Norlock
 O'Neill Gordon
 O'Toole
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Sweet
 Toet
 Trottier
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Warawa
 Watson
 Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Yurdiga

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Barlow
 Benoit
 Bezan
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Brown (Barrie)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Eglinski
 Fantino
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Goguen
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Harper
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Lemieux
 Lizon
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Nicholson
 Oliver
 Opitz
 Paradis
 Perkins
 Preston
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Strahl
 Tilson
 Trost
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 Wilks
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Business of Supply

NAYS

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 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 St-Denis
 Sullivan
 Trudeau
 Valeriotte

Allen (Welland)
 Angus
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 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai
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 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Murray
 Nash
 Nunez-Melo
 Pappillon
 Perreault
 Plamondon
 Rafferty
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Sandhu
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Tremblay
 Turmel
 Vaughan— 118

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

(Bill read second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

The House resumed from March 10 consideration of the motion.

Business of Supply

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the business of supply.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 349*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Allen (Welland)
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brison
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Côté	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Easter	Eyking
Footé	Freeland
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Jones	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis	Stewart
Sullivan	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valerioté	Vaughan— 118

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
----------	-------

Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Barlow	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bezan	Blaney
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Eglinski
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayer	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Perkins
Poilievre	Preston
Raiitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 146

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Routine Proceedings

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The House resumed from March 10 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is there agreement?

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the vote and the NDP will vote in favour of the motion.

[English]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals agree to apply the vote and will be voting yes.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem proceeding in this fashion. I will be voting in favour.

Mr. Scott Andrews: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting in favour.

[Translation]

Mr. André Bellavance: Mr. Speaker, I will vote in favour of the motion.

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I will vote in favour of the motion.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, we agree to proceed in this fashion and we will vote yes.

Ms. Manon Perreault: Mr. Speaker, I will vote in favour of the motion.

[English]

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

(Division No. 350)

YEAS

Members

Abлонczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Andrews
Armstrong
Aspin
Aubin
Barlow

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Welland)
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Angus
Ashton
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bateman

Bélangier
Bennett
Benskin
Bezan
Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin
Boughen
Boutin-Sweet
Braid
Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calandra
Cannan
Caron
Casey
Charlton
Chisu
Choquette
Clarke
Clement
Crockatt
Cuzner
Davidson
Day
Devolin
Dion
Donnelly
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dykstra
Egliniski
Falk
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Foote
Galipeau
Gameau
Genest
Giguère
Godin
Goldring
Goodyear
Gourde
Grewal
Harper
Harris (St. John's East)
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Latendresse
Lebel
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Leslie
Liu
Lobb
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
Marston
Masse
May
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray
Nash
Nicholson
Nunez-Melo
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Bellavance
Benoit
Bergen
Blanchette
Blaney
Borg
Boulerice
Brahmi
Breitkreuz
Brosseau
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Byrne
Calkins
Carmichael
Carrie
Cash
Chicoine
Chong
Christopherson
Cleary
Côté
Cullen
Daniel
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dechert
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubé
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dusseau
Easter
Eyking
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Freeland
Gallant
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Glover
Goguen
Goodale
Gosal
Gravelle
Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hoback
Hsu
Jones
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lapointe
Lauzon
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Lemieux
Leung
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacAulay
MacKenzie
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Norlock
Oliver
Opitz
Pacetti

Private Members' Business

Papillon
Payne
Perkins
Pilon
Poilievre
Quach
Raitt
Rankin
Regan
Rempel
Rickford
Rousseau
Sandhu
Schellenberger
Seeback
Sgro
Shipley
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Sopuck
Stanton
Stewart
Sullivan
Tilson
Tremblay
Trottier
Turmel
Valcourt
Van Kesteren
Vaughan
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Yurdiga

Paradis
Péclét
Perreault
Plamondon
Preston
Rafferty
Rajotte
Raynault
Reid
Richards
Ritz
Saganash
Saxton
Scott
Sellah
Shea
Shory
Smith
Sorenson
St-Denis
Strahl
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Trudeau
Uppal
Valerioté
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 264

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

REMOVAL OF IMPRISONMENT IN RELATION TO MANDATORY SURVEYS ACT

The House resumed from February 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-625, An Act to amend the Statistics Act (removal of imprisonment), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-625, under private members' business.

● (1845)

[English]

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

(Division No. 351)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht

Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Andrews
Armstrong
Aspin
Aubin
Barlow
Bélanger
Bennett
Benskin
Bezan
Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin
Boughen
Boutin-Sweet
Braid
Brisson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calandra
Cannan
Caron
Casey
Charlton
Chisu
Choquette
Clarke
Clement
Crockatt
Cuzner
Davidson
Day
Devolin
Dion
Donnelly
Dreesen
Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dykstra
Eglinski
Falk
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Foote
Galipeau
Garneau
Genest
Giguère
Godin
Goldring
Goodyear
Gourde
Grewal
Harper
Harris (St. John's East)
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Latendresse
Lebel
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie
Liu
Lobb
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
Marston
Masse
May
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)

Allen (Welland)
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Angus
Ashton
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bateman
Bellavance
Benoit
Bergen
Blanchette
Blaney
Borg
Boulerice
Brahmi
Breitkreuz
Brousseau
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooog
Byrne
Calkins
Carmichael
Carrie
Cash
Chicoine
Chong
Christopherson
Cleary
Côté
Cullen
Daniel
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dechert
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubé
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dusseault
Easter
Eyking
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Freeland
Gallant
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Glover
Goguen
Goodale
Gosal
Gravelle
Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hoback
Hsu
Jones
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lapointe
Lauzon
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Lemieux
Leung
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacAulay
MacKenzie
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)

Private Members' Business

Moore (Fundy Royal)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nicholson	Norlock
Nunez-Melo	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Pacetti
Papillon	Paradis
Payne	Péclet
Perkins	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Poilievre	Preston
Quach	Rafferty
Raitt	Rajotte
Rankin	Raynault
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Saxton
Schellenberger	Scott
Seeback	Sellah
Sgro	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	St-Denis
Strahl	Sullivan
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Tremblay
Trost	Trottier
Trudeau	Turmel
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriotte	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vaughan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga
Zimmer— 263	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion adopted.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

(Bill read second time and referred to a committee)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:46 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

* * *

[*English*]

TAKEOVER OF STELCO

The House resumed from December 4, 2014 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the motion in principle. The situation in Hamilton is one all of us should be paying close attention to. As steel

mills close and as infrastructure spending, in particular, is not spent in the country, there is a direct correlation between the two.

If the government had not cut infrastructure spending by almost 89%, perhaps some of the companies in our country that are producing steel, and in particular the workers and the communities where that product is manufactured and is so critical to the local economy, those steel mills would not be going quiet.

That is why the integrated approach to our economic development, which includes building cities but using steel to build those cities, is so fundamental to the policies that are central to my reason for being in politics, but also central to the reasons for the motion in front of us.

A deal was struck to try to save Stelco and to put Hamilton back on a path toward a more prosperous future, but apparently it did not work. The details of that deal need to be tabled immediately. That is part of what the motion seeks to do.

The protection of those pensions is tough to do through this motion. In principle, we understand the need to do it. We understand how not only the lives of the people impacted are so critical but we also understand the expectation in Hamilton and in Southern Ontario of how those pensions integrate themselves into the local economy and help with the diversification of the local economy. When all that disappears, it is not simply a steel mill going quiet. It is a town going quiet. We cannot allow that to happen.

The way to preserve and present a better opportunity and future for the City of Hamilton is to work with the workers, with the investors in the plan, and with the cities that want to consume the steel as they build great places to live, work, play and invest. The way to do it is to work together. Instead, what we get is a quiet, secret deal in the back rooms. They throw up their hands and say, "It's the economy. It's the free market speaking", and then the calamity arrives. We do not get a proactive and integrated approach to solving the economic challenges that confront communities like Hamilton.

Be assured, a Liberal government, the next government, will work very hard not only to protect the rights of workers but to protect the economy in southern Ontario. Having a strong Hamilton feeds into a strong Oakville, feeds into a strong Oshawa, and a strong manufacturing base that deals with the strong economy in this part of the country.

The loss of the steel mill, throwing up its hands and not getting engaged as a government is simply unacceptable, and is not right. Therefore, it is not just the anxiety of pensioners we are measuring in the motion and not just the measurement of a city and a local economy that feels it has been abandoned by the federal government, it is all of southern Ontario. It is the entire manufacturing base of the country.

We cannot just extract minerals. We must also process those minerals. We cannot just process minerals for foreign markets. We need to employ those minerals, particularly steel, in the construction of not just an economy but of southern Ontario's cities and all of Canada's cities.

Private Members' Business

The approach of the government, which is to pretend that a deal is a deal and therefore it must be a good deal and not to provide follow-up, oversight and discipline to that process, is what is failing the manufacturing sector in southern Ontario. It is what is failing cities in our country.

The cut to infrastructure spending, the abandonment of pensioners in Hamilton, walking away from industry in southern Ontario, none of this is good economic policy. It is why we are now experiencing a trade deficit. It is why youth unemployment is so high. It is why property taxes are rising so quickly, particularly around the Golden Horseshoe. The government claims to be cutting taxes, but in fact is downloading on cities. There is no integrated economic strategy for individuals, for industries or for cities in this part of the country.

Imagine if transit was being supported and built. Where would the steel come from? Imagine if new homes were being built. Imagine where the steel and other resources would be coming from. Imagine that the St. Lawrence River and the St. Lawrence system and the bridges that crisscross it were being rebuilt instead of the debate being deferred and the thumbs being twiddled on the other side of the House. Steel would be used. Hamilton would be happy. The pensioners would feel secure in their retirement.

Instead, what we get offered are things like income splitting. Income splitting does not work if one's pension disappears. In fact, income splitting gets worse if one's pension disappears and the city's economy starts to disappear with it.

● (1850)

It is time for a rethink on how we build this country. Simply building perfect budgets, which the government still has failed to do as it has yet to balance a budget, does not necessarily build a stronger Canada. It certainly does not build stronger cities.

We have to rethink this model. It starts by supporting places like Hamilton and by supporting motions like the one in front of us. However, it will not be finished until we get back to the real job of the government, which is to build a strong country, which takes building better provinces, which is a focus on building strong cities, but when we get down to it, it is actually building strong communities, which we know are comprised of people who can retire in dignity, can work with pride, and can contribute to the construction of a great country.

We have not seen any of that with the approach the government has shown to Hamilton and that is wrong. It is time to change that attitude. Unfortunately, the only real way you can change that attitude is to change the government.

We support this motion in the interim. We support its principles. Most importantly, we stand by the people of Hamilton, the retirees of Stelco included. It is time to protect the investment this country has made in the steel mills in Hamilton and Stelco, in particular. It is time to stand up for Hamilton, stand up for cities, and more importantly, stand up to the government, which has ignored this crisis and is only making it worse by its indifference.

● (1855)

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with mixed emotions that I stand today to speak to this particular motion by my good friend from Hamilton Centre.

I want to congratulate the president and executive of USWA 1005 who fought tooth and nail for the last number of years, along with us in the NDP. Both locally and nationally, the NDP have spoken out on this since the deal was initiated in 2007. I was elected to this House in 2006, and for that many years, from 2007, we have been trying to get the essence of that deal put before the public.

The motion that comes from my friend calls for the government to apologize to the Hamilton community and to our country for approving the U.S. Steel takeover of Stelco because it failed to provide a net benefit.

Members will know that any foreign takeover bid requires a review that looks to a net benefit for Canada. It also calls for that particular deal to be made public. With respect to the acquisition of Stelco in 2007 and the 2011 out-of-court settlement, both of these documents and materials, the evidence that supports them, should be made public.

What is the possible reason for so much secretiveness in this particular arrangement? The tidbits of information that USWA was able to get came from the United States, of all places. There was a court action in the United States where some of it was made public. We turned to the United States to get information our own government would not provide.

The final part of the member's motion would ensure that employee pensions are protected, including amending the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies Creditors Arrangement Act.

A number of years ago, around 2008-11, I was our party's critic who dealt with pensions. I proposed a piece of legislation to the government at that time. I did not table it in the House, but I went to Ted Menzies, the parliamentary secretary of the day, and said to him that I had a bill that would put the pensioners at the head of the line as secured debt in cases of bankruptcy and insolvency. These are deferred wages, very clearly the property of the workers.

At that time, in fairness to Mr. Menzies, he said he would take it to others in the cabinet and see what he could do. Ultimately, the government said no, it was not prepared to do it because it had some concerns.

Let us imagine today, in the situation that Stelco is in, if that had been passed. It was also proposed to the government prior to Nortel's debacle. As we know, it had somewhere in the area of \$6 billion of assets, and the pensioners' pensions were cut 37%. Not only that, 450 people, who were on benefits, who were not employable, lost everything. There was certainly room for a change.

There is so much to talk about in this particular circumstance. This particular company, under the name of Stelco, in 2004, already went through CCAA protection. At that time, there was a tremendous push-back from the people of Hamilton and the USWA, in particular, against the move. There was \$545 million in long-term debt and a \$1.3 billion deficit in the pension fund obligations at that time.

When we moved forward from that, Stelco came out of that, and millions of dollars went to the person who represented the company, who went back to the United States. It was somewhere in the area of \$50 million when there was a debt of this nature.

Then we had several suitors for the company. I recall meeting with the vice-president of a company in Russia at that time. It was a mining company 800 miles north of Moscow. It built hospitals for the workers. It paid their taxes for them.

● (1900)

In that part of the world they were having trouble with abuse of vodka. Circuses were still part of that culture at the time, so they started a circus training school. In other words, they had a commitment to the workers and they offered to come to Hamilton. As I recall, they offered a \$350-million investment in the plant in Hamilton. They offered to assume the debt and pay off the pension debt.

The powers that be took the decision to go to U.S. Steel instead. The end result is the workers of Hamilton are paying a terrible penalty for that decision. It is certainly not a net benefit to the 8,000 retirees who are looking at losing somewhere in the area of 20% of their pension, if not more, depending on where the market is, if that were to be shut down. Clearly, the outlook they are facing is that the company wants to sell so it wants to divest itself of those obligations to make the company saleable.

We have to sit back and wonder, where was the government when it had an obligation to protect the workers and the investors in Canada when this deal was put together? Where was the government when it was supposed to be standing up for the workers of Hamilton? Is this a model of what other companies can expect, to be sold down the river because the government is not prepared to stand up for its own workers in its own country? It is shocking when we consider that the government will not share the information with its own citizens. It is beyond comprehension.

In 2008-09, U.S. Steel laid off 700 workers in Hamilton. It had made a commitment that it was going to sustain and maintain employment. In 2009, it shut down most of its Canadian operations and locked out workers in a labour dispute in Hamilton. It shut down the blast furnace in 2009. If one understands the workings of a blast furnace, if it is shut down for any length of time it is ruined. It cannot be used again. By shutting it down, officials were signalling to the people of Hamilton that they were walking away from Hamilton.

At one point the Canadian government looked at the deal, whatever it says, and said that U.S. Steel did not live up to it, so it was taken to court. For a moment in Hamilton we started to say maybe the government is starting to consider supporting the workers in this community. As the court proceedings went on and we were led to understand we were going to be successful, there was an arrangement between the company and the government to end the lawsuit.

For the people who were out of work, they would have received past wages for the time they would have been off the job because it violated the agreement. Instead of going to court, getting that resolution, there was a private deal made that did nothing for the workers in Hamilton. There was a token payment made to some

people in Hamilton. Monies that were paid were a very small portion of the obligation of over \$1.2 billion to the pension plan.

Going back to the original motion, at the very least the government should be apologizing to the people of Hamilton and to the workers at U.S. Steel, formerly Stelco. Conservatives need to make public those undertakings. Even with the bad taste that people have in their mouth about all of this, they are still are trying to somehow understand what has happened. They should be given the opportunity to look at the undertakings between U.S. Steel and the government with regard to employment, steel production and the ongoing funding of the pension plan, which was not done.

I am saddened that we find ourselves at this place in time. Again, I want to commend the member for Hamilton Centre. We have been in the House probably 40 or 50 times over the last eight years speaking out on this. The government has not been listening and it is very evident.

● (1905)

Mr. John Barlow (MacLeod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise to address the concerns raised by the member for Hamilton Centre regarding U.S. Steel's acquisition of Stelco in 2007, a transaction that was reviewed under the provisions of the Investment Canada Act.

In debating the motion today, it is important to bear in mind the actual application of this investment regime and review process set out in the ICA. We should also acknowledge the important amendments our government has made to the ICA to ensure that it continues to effectively attract investment that is beneficial to all Canadians.

In the first section of the Investment Canada Act, the law explicitly recognizes that foreign investment results in increased capital and technological benefits for Canada, which in turn encourages economic growth and employment opportunities in Canada. It mandates that investments be reviewed for their likely net benefit to Canada when they exceed certain monetary thresholds. For a reviewable investment to proceed, the Minister of Industry must be satisfied that the proposed investment is likely to be a net benefit to Canada.

The act focuses on those investments that are likely to be most influential on the economy, usually in the order of 10 to 20 transactions per year. These transactions, although they are all significant, can vary in size. They vary by sector, from natural resources to utilities, from wholesale to retail. They each present their own merits that warrant careful consideration and scrutiny. Therefore, the minister must examine each proposal on a case-by-case basis.

Private Members' Business

In coming to a decision, the minister must consider the six net benefit factors that are clearly articulated in the act: first, the effect of the investment on the level and nature of economic activity in Canada, including the effect on employment, resource processing and the utilization of parts, components and services produced here in Canada; second, the degree and significance of participation by Canadians in Canadian business; third, the minister must consider the effect of the investment on productivity, industrial efficiency, technological advancement and development, product innovation and product variety in Canada; fourth, the effect of the investment on competition within any industry or industries in Canada is considered; fifth, the compatibility of the investment with national, provincial, industrial, economic and cultural policies must be weighted; and sixth, the contribution of the investment to Canada's ability to compete in world markets.

Potential investors provide business plans which can be supplemented with undertakings to support their contention that their investment represents a net benefit to Canada. The minister then carefully considers the application in light of the net benefit factors I have just described.

It is worth recalling that the present investment review framework under the ICA has evolved over time, as Canada has responded to changing sources of foreign investment in the world economy.

The Foreign Investment Review Act was passed by Parliament in 1973 and its broad scope reflected an ambivalence toward the presence of foreign investment in the Canadian economy. In clear recognition of the importance of foreign investment, Parliament replaced the FIRA with the ICA in 1985.

The ICA explicitly welcomed foreign investment by increasing the threshold for review, removing the minister's investigative powers and reducing the time it took to review applications. This has made the process more predictable and more welcoming for business.

Since that time, both the global investment landscape and the policy framework to respond to it have evolved. The capital and technology needed to spur economic growth comes from an increasingly wide group of investors, and it is important for Canada to maintain its attractiveness to a wide range of foreign investment from around the world.

At the same time, our government has been vigilant in ensuring that foreign investment in Canada actually benefits the Canadian economy and hard-working Canadians. To ensure the act remains effective in a globalized world, the government has introduced several targeted reforms to the act to keep Canada's investment review regime up to date in the face of new and evolving economic realities.

First, in 2007, our government introduced guidelines on investments by state-owned enterprises in recognition of the reality that investments by foreign state-owned entities were unique in nature. A policy statement in 2012 provided added clarification to those guidelines.

• (1910)

In 2009, our government introduced national security review provisions into the ICA. We also made changes to increase the

threshold for net benefit reviews from \$330 million to \$1 billion and to adjust the basis for calculating the review threshold from asset value to enterprise value. This change will more accurately capture the value of businesses operating in the modern economy.

Finally, economic action plan 2014 introduced amendments that will, among other things, give government greater flexibility to provide information on key decision points in the national security review process.

The ICA is just part of our broader economic agenda. Indeed, since day one, we have been cutting taxes for job-creating businesses. In the past five years alone, we have delivered tax reductions to businesses totalling more than \$60 billion. We have reduced the federal general corporate tax from 22% to 15% and lowered the small business tax rate to 11%. We have also extended the temporary accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment through 2015.

I can tell everyone that Canada now offers the lowest overall tax rate on new business investment in the entire G7. The competitiveness of Canada's business tax system was lauded by KPMG, which concluded that Canada's total business taxes were the lowest in the G7, more than 40% lower than the United States. Importantly, where the ICA is concerned, growth and foreign direct investment in Canada has been the strongest among the G7 countries over the course of this recovery.

Canada's economic success is due in no small measure to a framework our government has put into place. This framework improves access to capital, technology and global expertise. With that framework in place, we are confident Canada will continue to attract foreign investment that will benefit all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 537, which has to do with the takeover of Stelco by U.S. Steel.

Before I begin, I would like to commend the hard work done by the member for Hamilton Centre, for whom I have a great deal of respect. He has a lot of experience and served as minister of correctional services in the Ontario legislature. He is also very passionate about defending the rights of workers, so I was not surprised to see him move such a motion in the House. He believes in it. It is very important to him.

Motion No. 537 by my colleague from Hamilton Centre urges the government to do three things: first of all, to apologize for approving the U.S. Steel takeover of Stelco on the grounds that it has failed to provide a net benefit; second, to make public the commitments U.S. Steel agreed to under the Investment Canada Act in respect of the acquisition of Stelco Inc. in 2007, and the 2011 out-of-court settlement, concerning employment and production guarantees and maintenance of the employee pension system—and I will come back to this part later—and third, to take action to ensure employee pensions are protected, including amending the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act.

Private Members' Business

I would like to take a moment to explain the first point of the motion moved by my NDP colleague. I will then talk about the third part of the motion, because it applies to a similar situation, one just as upsetting, that happened in my riding over five years ago.

Let us look at what the first point is all about. Why ask the government to apologize for approving the takeover of Stelco by U.S. Steel because there was no net benefit? Let me give a little background on what motivated us to do that. Before it was called U.S. Steel, the company was called Stelco. It was a company that specialized in steel manufacturing that operated in southwestern Ontario.

In 2004, Stelco declared that it had \$545 million in long-term debt and a \$1.3 billion deficit in pension funding obligations. Therefore, Stelco applied for bankruptcy protection under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act.

In March 2006, Stelco came out of Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act protection after selling off different production units. In 2007, in a transaction that was subject to review for approval under the Investment Canada Act, U.S. Steel purchased Stelco for \$1.9 billion—\$1.1 billion in cash and \$800 million in assumed debt.

U.S. Steel undertook to maintain jobs and production and honour pension obligations by making \$70 million in annual payments to the employee pension funds to return them to solvency by 2015. Based on that information, the federal government approved the takeover with the understanding that it would be a “net benefit” to Canada.

This is where the story takes a terrible turn. In 2008-09, 700 workers were laid off in Hamilton. That is certainly not a net benefit. There was also the shutdown of the majority of operations in Canada, which is certainly not a net benefit, and the 11-month lockout of the workers in Hamilton and Nanticoke. Then the federal government took U.S. Steel to Federal Court for failing to meet its undertakings on production and pensions. They settled out of court in 2011.

The company undertook to continue producing steel in Canada and make at least \$50 million in capital investments to maintain its Canadian facilities. Then it started all over again. In 2013, almost 1,000 workers were locked out for four months. In 2014, U.S. Steel filed for bankruptcy protection, claiming an \$800 million shortfall with respect to pensions, of course. Pensioners are still facing the possibility of having their pensions reduced by 30%.

My colleague from Hamilton Centre is right: workers and Canadians deserve an apology from the government for approving the takeover by U.S. Steel. It is obvious that what happened was not a net benefit to Canada. When we see such situations, it is also clear that the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act need a complete overhaul.

•(1915)

Only the NDP, with the decades of work that it has done in defence of the rights of workers and the middle class in Canada, will have the political courage to address these issues. We will begin in eight months.

Unfortunately, what the U.S. Steel workers are going through all too closely resembles what happened to F.F. Soucy workers in my riding. F.F. Soucy was bought out by the American company White Birch Paper in 2007. From 2010 until just recently, retirees were living under the threat of having their pensions cut dramatically. Workers aged 55 and under stood to lose up to 70% of their pension. That is huge.

The retirees had to wait until January 2015 for a judge to rule that they would receive the amounts they had been owed since December 2012. It is shameful that these retirees have been waiting since December 2012 to get what they are owed. The judge also decided that they would be paid 90% of their original pension. That was five years of stress and lost income for these retired men and women who were not guilty of anything more than earning an honest living under a legally negotiated agreement.

The representatives of the F.F. Soucy retirees are right. This case shows why the laws need to be strengthened to ensure that pension plans are given preferred creditor status in Canada.

I will support the motion by my colleague from Hamilton Centre, since too many events in recent history have proven that this motion is appropriate and necessary.

In southeastern Ontario, as in Rivière-du-Loup and all across Canada, there are too many transactions that provide no net benefit to Canadians and too many retirees who have seen their pensions suffer. This needs to change. I am proud to rise with my colleagues in the NDP who are showing, with Motion No. 537, that they do not just talk about their values, but they are also prepared to act on those values right now. Some colleagues are telling me that there are other cases, like Nortel. I would like all my colleagues to have a chance to speak. There are a lot of examples.

In the minute I have left, I would like to put this all in perspective. There seems to be this complete obsession on the right, which can be found across the country, but you hear it a lot on right-wing radio in Quebec, with denigrating unionized workers, and it has gotten completely out of hand.

We need to remind the public that these agreements came out of a completely legal negotiation process. When workers say that they are entitled to something, it is because they have a completely legal agreement. We need to remind the public of what happens in the communities affected. Take, for example, the 200 or so F.F. Soucy retirees who spent years worrying about losing 70% of their retirement income. Just imagine the stress of being in your sixties, having worked for 30 or 35 years and no longer being sure that you will get 70% of your income for your remaining years. Imagine that stress.

Private Members' Business

Communities and people who are not unionized—such as restaurant owners—have to understand that when hundreds of retirees suddenly see their income collapse because one party did not hold up its end of the pension payment agreement, that is bad for everyone. If, year after year, a retiree is afraid of losing 70% of his income or actually does lose 30% of it, will he still have discretionary funds to spend at cafés and restaurants every weekend? This has a direct impact on the whole community.

When right wingers go on and on about how unions are useless, that has a negative impact on workers and working conditions in the industrial sector. Ultimately, communities suffer. That is what people need to be reminded of. The right has a tendency to get completely hysterical when it comes to the basic rights of workers.

• (1920)

[English]

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join in this debate today in response to the motion from my colleague regarding the acquisition of Stelco by U.S. Steel in 2007 under the Investment Canada Act or the ICA.

The motion calls for three things: (a) for the government to apologize to the people of Hamilton for approving the deal with U.S. Steel; (b) to release publicly the ICA commitments with U.S. Steel; and, (c) take action to ensure the pension benefits are protected.

My colleagues have clearly addressed, in both first reading and again today, why the government is against this motion. Therefore, I am not going to repeat a lot of the points that were raised by my colleagues. Rather, I rise today to speak to the importance of foreign investments to Canada's continued economic growth.

The motion suggests that U.S. Steel's current situation reflects a flaw in Canada's foreign investment policy, a suggestion that is simply not supported by the facts. Foreign investment is vital to sustaining Canada's strong record on economic growth and job creation. By introducing a competitive tax system and reducing red tape, our government has created an attractive economic climate for both domestic and foreign investment.

More competition means Canadians get goods and services at lower prices, workers can find higher-paying jobs, and Canadian businesses find themselves better equipped for success in global markets. Key to this strong business environment is Canada's foreign investment framework, promoting investments that are in Canada's interests. Indeed, the positive benefits of foreign investment are well-established. Let me outline a few.

First and foremost, foreign investment increases productivity. This is reflected in higher-paying jobs for Canadians.

Second, foreign investment provides new capital that Canadian firms need to grow and excel. New technologies and innovative business practices allow Canadian enterprises to compete on the world stage. Foreign investment is particularly critical for unlocking the full value of Canada's natural resources. It is also important for helping the manufacturing sector, which accounts for half of business research and development in Canada.

Third, foreign investment allows Canadian businesses to access the knowledge, capabilities and management expertise of world-

leading businesses. This exposure can increase the productivity, efficiency and competitiveness of Canadian firms. Foreign investment also provides Canadian businesses with access to new markets. Foreign investment can provide an unparalleled opportunity for our exporters to diversify their sales by accessing the world's most rapidly growing economies. It is critical for integrating Canadian firms into global value chains. Many Canadian suppliers were initially selected for their proximity to larger firms. Over time, these Canadian companies have since developed their own leading-edge specialized skills and technologies.

To continue to realize the full benefits of foreign investment, Canada must maintain the economic conditions necessary to attract foreign investment. Canada's economic performance under this government has been very strong relative to other industrialized countries coming out of the 2008 global economic downturn. Canada has been widely applauded for having weathered and recovered quickly from the global economic downturn and foreign investors have taken notice.

Since that time, Canada has achieved one of the best job creation and economic growth rates in the G7. This achievement is all the more remarkable when taking into account the global economic uncertainty that we have witnessed over recent years.

According to Statistics Canada, Canada's economy was the first among G7 nations to recoup the employment losses recorded during the downturn. The ICA framework rewards initiative and innovation, and makes Canada an investment destination of choice for international investors.

• (1925)

Our government has kept taxes low for Canadians and for Canadian businesses, supporting job creation, growth and investment. We have introduced a successful formula for foreign investment by leveraging abundant energy resources with a capacity for innovation, a fiscally stable and predictable economy, and a competitive business environment. Our plan for jobs and growth has resulted in significant investments to promote innovation, foster research and development, and ensure that Canadians are equipped with the skills and training they need to succeed in a globalized economy.

Businesses operating in Canada also benefit from the advantages provided by our sound financial institutions, our highly skilled labour force, and our world-leading capabilities in science and technology. In short, we have put in place the foundation to make Canada a world leader today and for future generations.

In addition to these measures, our government is committed to open borders and free trade. History has shown that trade is the best way to create jobs and growth, and boost our standard of living.

Private Members' Business

Our government has worked diligently to secure access to new markets and increase exports of Canadian goods and services to global markets, providing new and diverse opportunities for Canadian companies.

In fact, when our government took office in 2006, Canada had free trade agreements with five countries. That was not good enough for a country where 60% of GDP and one in five jobs were tied to trade. We now have free trade deals with 43 countries, a record that includes the two largest markets in the world, Europe and the United States. We are pursuing trade and investment agreements with many more, including large markets such as China, India and Japan, and also as part of the trans-Pacific partnership.

Our government will continue to attract the benefits of foreign investment to Canada by maintaining policies that support economic growth. Foreign investment review as part of the Investment Canada Act is a key part of Canada's economic framework. Our balanced approach ensures that foreign investment transactions are reviewed on their merits based on the long-term interests of the Canadian economy. Foreign investment has boosted Canada's productivity, created jobs, and enhanced research and development undertaken in Canada. These investments have also clearly demonstrated to the world that Canada is open for business.

In conclusion, our government has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that Canadian businesses can compete in both domestic and international markets.

In order to prosper, create jobs, and maintain a high standard of living for Canadians, it is important to have modern policies in place that encourage trade and investment. Under our government, we will continue to attract world-class companies with high-paying jobs, leading to strong, sustainable economic growth and prosperity for all Canadians.

● (1930)

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, may I first thank all of my colleagues from all parties, across the aisle and on this side, for their participation and for taking this matter seriously. It is very important to the people of Hamilton, so I thank everyone for that.

Having said that, I have to say that there was not a government member who got up and said anything that was of any real value, other than a lot of rhetoric and reading out Conservative talking points about what they have done. Nowhere did anyone stand up and address the key issues we have placed before Parliament. Once again, it shows that these workers, employees, potential pensioners and those already on a pension are just not a priority for the Conservative government. Anyone who wants to question that should read the *Hansard*. Read *Hansard* and see what was not said as opposed to what was said.

On the other side of the spectrum, let me also thank my two Hamilton colleagues, the member for Hamilton Mountain and the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. They both spoke very passionately and knowledgeably on the issue in front of us and on the harm and damage being done to these U.S. Steel workers, formerly Stelco workers, and members of Local 1005 USW.

If people are interested, a lot of the rhetoric came up about what happened with the pensions at Stelco back in the 1990s provincially. I urge anyone who wants to know the truth and the facts about that to visit the remarks of my colleague from Hamilton Mountain on December 4, 2014, when we first debated this. She went into great detail, spelling out exactly what is the truth and what is just a lot of myth, politics, and spin. I thank her so much for that.

I also want to thank my colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup so much for his passionate remarks. We can certainly tell that he gets this issue.

My motion asks for three very simple things. It is not that complicated. Number one, we asked for an apology, and we feel that we are owed an apology, because it is the government that makes a decision, under the Investment Canada Act, as to whether a foreign takeover can take place. That is a judgement call, and it is supposed to be based on whether there is a net benefit to Canada. There was no net benefit to Canada. There sure as heck was no net benefit to those pensioners whose pensions are on the line right now. Their whole quality of life is on the line right now. There was no net benefit for them.

This was a terrible decision at best. It is not unreasonable for the people of Hamilton to ask for an apology from the government for making this really awful, horrid decision that has led to this crisis in all of these hundreds and thousands of Canadians' lives. It is nothing less than that.

We asked the government to make public its secret deal that got us to this point. The Hamilton city council has asked for the documents. It has taken this so seriously that it has struck a special steel subcommittee. I believe it was today that Councillor Scott Duvall was re-elected as the chair of that committee. Councillor Sam Merulla is the vice-chair. That is how seriously the people of Hamilton take this issue.

We asked that the government make amendments to the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, the CCAA, to ensure that in the future, pensioners go to the top of the list, not the bottom.

Here is the crime of this. One cannot relive the years it takes to build up a pension. To deny people the right to the pension they worked for is unacceptable in this country. It is immoral to do that to people, yet that is exactly what is happening here. It is not just the union workers. It is also the salaried non-union workers. Their pensions are on the line just as much.

This is unacceptable. We need to turn around and elect a government that is going to care about the people of this country by doubling the CPP, for example, rather than throwing people off pension lines in terms of the amounts they are entitled to receive.

● (1935)

This action by the government has caused countless heartaches and stress for all those people affected, and the government to this minute, has still not given Hamiltonians the justice and decent attention that they are entitled to.

Adjournment Proceedings

Until the government does, we in the NDP and those of us from Hamilton will stand up and holler from the rooftops that this is wrong, and we want pensioners and Hamiltonians to attack it the way it deserves.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, March 25, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand in this House to follow up on our discussion about the cuts experienced by the Odawa Centre as a result of changes to federal funding geared toward helping the homeless.

Shawenjeagamik Aboriginal Drop In Centre at 510 Rideau, which helps Ottawa's indigenous homeless population, is under great financial duress due to changes to federal funding geared toward helping the homeless. Through the Odawa Friendship Centre, a desperately needed drop-in centre that has been operating for over 10 years, first nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Ottawa have had a place to go. In fact, it is a place that has been vital to the healing of first peoples in Ottawa, many of whom are at risk and in transition.

Shawenjeagamik is committed to enhancing the health and well-being of the aboriginal homeless community. It is a place where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Its protocol is guided by seven gifts of the grandfather teachings: honesty, humility, trust, love, bravery, caring, and courage. Here in Ottawa it offers unique, culturally appropriate services that provide not just a physical space for people to go, but a space that embraces a diversity of needs and responds with care and compassion.

A couple of weeks ago, I attended a rally that was held here in Ottawa in front of City Hall to bring attention to the need for the centre. I heard from many of the people who frequent what is known as "510", and they clearly articulated how important that space is for them. It is important for them to find services that meet their physical needs and also their emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs.

Those who have spoken out, whether in the news, online, or at the rallies in support of the centre, have rightly drawn the connection between the history of colonialism here in Canada and the deep need for a culturally appropriate space for those who are still trying to overcome trauma in their lives.

Shawenjeagamik welcomes close to 100 people a week and supports these individuals by providing hot meals, laundry services, crisis counselling, and transition services. As well, indigenous homeless clients from across the city are referred to 510 Rideau for culturally appropriate support based on trust, friendship, and mutual respect.

I rise in this House to follow up on the question that I asked a few weeks ago in asking the government when Shawenjeagamik, 510 Rideau, can see some response to the need that it has and avoid what could happen if that need is not met, which would be closing its doors, which would in turn leave many first nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Ottawa without a place to go.

● (1940)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the minister indicated in his reply on February 5, it is our understanding that this was a decision made by the city of Ottawa to reduce this funding. Certainly, our government believes we need to work with willing partners across the country and in the city of Ottawa as well to provide services in a culturally appropriate manner and to do so in a way that also respects taxpayer dollars.

We remain committed to an urban aboriginal strategy. I have had the pleasure of announcing several funds in different events across the country where we have provided funding for aboriginal people who are away from their home reserves and looking for services in a culturally appropriate setting. We have worked closely with the friendship centres right across the country to deliver those kinds of services.

Again, we will continue to do so in a way that is responsible to taxpayers and takes into account the needs of aboriginal Canadians, working with willing partners to deliver those services.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I was here to hear the minister's response, who pointed the blame on the city of Ottawa.

We are aware that there were changes made to the criteria around homeless funding. While the city of Ottawa must take leadership in restoring funding, there needs to be broader federal leadership when it comes to investing in services for the homeless that are particular to indigenous people who find themselves in urban centres living on the margins or falling through the cracks. I know this to be the case in my home community. That funding has not been sustainable, has not been long term and obviously causes a great deal of distress for not only those on the street, but also for those who are keen to provide these services.

Adjournment Proceedings

I would ask the parliamentary secretary and his government to consider the importance of supporting funding when it comes to homeless services for first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated previously, and as the member has indicated as well, this was a decision that was taken by the city of Ottawa. Again, we partner with cities, friendship centres and service-delivery providers right across the country to deliver services to aboriginal Canadians where they live, and we will continue to do so with our aboriginal urban strategy.

We will continue to work to address homelessness with the provinces and local cities. We look forward to continuing to do that in a way that respects taxpayer dollars and is culturally sensitive to aboriginal peoples.

• (1945)

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during question period on December 12, 2014, I asked this government to answer for its false promises.

The Conservatives lied to us all when they promised flexible federalism, where the provinces would be respected.

In the history of Canada, I do not believe there has ever been a government as closed to the idea of consulting the provinces, when they are the ones most affected by a number of very serious concerns.

Recently, the Prime Minister decided to make unilateral changes to health transfers, without consulting the provinces. The provinces will have to deal with a net loss of \$36 billion in the area of health.

Even though the cost of a number of medical services and investments in cutting-edge technology are growing, the message being sent to the provinces is to do more with less.

Having more and more bills and fewer and fewer means with which to pay them is a situation that oddly resembles Canadian household debt, another issue the government is not willing to come up with viable solutions for.

I want to read two passages from the preamble to the Canada Health Act.

The first reads as follows:

...that future improvements in health will require the cooperative partnership of governments, health professionals, voluntary organizations and individual Canadians...

This can be summarized in one word: consultation.

In that passage, there is an *s* at the end of the word “governments”. We wonder if this government understands its own laws. It seems to me that there is a huge difference between the words “co-operation” and “unilateralism”.

Since I was elected, the Conservatives have been the champions of unilateralism. The Conservatives unilaterally make decisions that will have a long-term effect on the quality of life of all Canadians. Making decisions without consultation seems to be their mantra.

The second passage from the same law reads as follows:

...whereas the Parliament of Canada wishes to encourage the development of health services throughout Canada by assisting the provinces in meeting the costs thereof...

Providing support means working with the provinces to come up with a lasting solution. Once again, this is an example of the Prime Minister's lack of leadership. The provinces need a federal partner that understands their concerns and wants to improve the public health care system.

Providing support does not mean cutting \$36 billion in health transfers to the provinces; it does not mean cutting employment insurance; and it does not mean giving gifts to big business.

Supporting the provinces involves planning for the future by offering them reasonable funding and establishing joint strategies. The provinces are being forced to suffer the consequences of a government that does not want to pay its fair share and will do anything to off-load its responsibilities onto them.

We are jeopardizing the sustainability of our free universal health care system.

What will happen to the great Canadian promise of free universal health care when the provinces can no longer afford to provide it? Once again, it will be people in need, those who are vulnerable or sick, who will suffer the consequences of these high-handed decisions.

Provincial and territorial health expenditures continue to grow. In the long term, vital services that families depend on will no longer be available.

The NDP is simply asking the Conservatives to start working with the provinces. We want the Conservatives to stop cutting transfers and stop off-loading their responsibilities onto the provinces.

When will the Conservatives open their eyes and veer off the dangerous economic path they are going down?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the member's question. The hon. member should know that the Government of Quebec will receive \$20.4 billion through major transfers in 2015-16, an increase of nearly 4% from the previous year. In fact, major federal transfers to provinces and territories will total \$68 billion in 2015-16, an increase of \$3 billion from the current year, an increase of almost 63% since 2005-06.

The government is ensuring that transfers will continue to grow. Specifically, equalization will continue to grow in line with the growth of the economy. The Canada health transfer will grow at 6% per year until 2016-17, and also in line with the growth of the economy starting in 2017-18, with a minimum assured growth rate of 3% per year. The Canada social transfer will continue to grow at 3% annually in 2015-16 and in future years.

Adjournment Proceedings

Comparable treatment for all Canadians is fundamental to the government. That is why through budget 2007, the government legislated an equal per capita cash allocation for the CST and beginning in 2014-15, the CHT.

I would also remind the House that equalization payments are determined based on the province's ability to raise revenues at national average tax rates.

A province's ability to raise revenues varies with its underlying economic conditions. A decrease in equalization payments reflects a strengthening of a province's economy compared to other equalization receiving provinces. That is a good news story and exactly how equalization is supposed to work.

The facts show that this government is keeping its word. We are delivering on our commitment to provinces and territories, including the Province of Quebec.

With total federal transfers at record highs and growing predictably at a sustainable and affordable rate, we are providing unprecedented support to the provinces for the delivery of the health and social services all Canadians rely on.

Perhaps the member is remembering a time when the Liberals radically slashed transfer payments to the provinces and territories, taking important services away from Canadians. Our government has not done that and never will do that. We will ensure that provinces and territories can provide the health care, education and other social services that families need.

I would remind the member and the House that even during the global economic crisis, our government increased transfers to the provinces and territories to help Canadians across this great country of ours. They can continue to count on this government.

● (1950)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, I am always surprised by the fancy footwork and demagoguery of the members opposite. Listening to that member, one would believe there is a surplus and the government is giving more in transfers to the provinces, although it is completely ignoring the planned \$36 billion cuts to health care.

Since 2012, the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer has been warning the Conservatives that their plan to cut health care transfers to the provinces will jeopardize the sustainability of the

health care system and force the provinces to cut vital services that families rely on.

Since 2012, the NDP has been trying to make the government understand that it is headed for disaster if it adopts unilateral measures that will affect the financial strength of the provinces. The reality is that provincial budgets are becoming tighter and tighter because of the costs being downloaded from the federal level, job losses in the manufacturing sector, high household debt, weak employment growth, high youth unemployment and the drop in the EI accessibility rate.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member opposite that while she might choose to ignore the facts, the facts are that equalization funding for provinces is based on a legislated formula and changes from year to year based on a province's economic strength relative to other provinces.

While Quebec's equalization payments have been increasing in recent years, Quebec's economic performance is improving relative to other equalization receiving provinces. This leads to a decline in the growth of the province's equalization payment. Quebec's equalization payment increased by almost 19% in 2014-15 and by almost 3% in 2015-16. It is a perfect example of how the equalization program is meant to work.

The numbers do not lie. Quebec has received \$9.6 million through equalization payments in this year alone, an increase of over 98% since 2006. It has received over \$7.8 million through the Canada health transfer, an increase of almost 56% from under the Liberals and over \$2.9 million through the Canada social transfer, an increase of over 39% since 2006.

Let me again assure the hon. member that provinces can continue to count on the long-term growing support from this government as we work together in this uncertain economy for the benefit of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: –The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:55 p.m.)

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