



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

---

VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 232 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

---

OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, June 16, 2015**



**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

---

*Prayers*

---

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)  
[English]

### INFORMATION COMMISSIONER OF CANADA

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to lay upon the table the annual report on the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act of the Information Commissioner of Canada for the year 2014-15.

[Translation]

These reports are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

\* \* \*

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 26 petitions.

\* \* \*

### DANGEROUS AND IMPAIRED DRIVING ACT

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-73, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences in relation to conveyances) and the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

\* \* \*

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the pleasure to present, in both official languages, two reports to the House this morning.

The first is the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its parliamentary mission to the next two countries that will hold the rotating

presidency of the Council of the European Union held in the Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and its participation in the second part of the 2015 ordinary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe held in Strasbourg, France, from April 13 to 24, 2015.

The second is the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the fourth Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum and the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region held in Reykjavik, Iceland, from May 10 to 12, 2015.

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Promoting Economic Prosperity Through Settlement Services".

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP would like to present a supplementary report to the report just tabled by my colleague, and for three reasons.

We do not necessarily disagree with what is in that report; however, we believe that there were some important points from the study that were not included in the report.

Witnesses spoke to the committee specifically about the need for accessible and affordable child care for families all across Canada, and that needs to be mentioned. The importance of recognizing foreign credentials for newcomers was also highlighted. Lastly, of course, the eligibility criteria for integration services need to be reviewed, given that we were told that many women and newcomers cannot access those services.

These things are very important to the NDP, which is why we wanted to emphasize them in a supplementary report.

\* \* \*

[English]

### CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-693, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (authorized absences and work releases).

*Routine Proceedings*

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to introduce my first private member's bill in this 41st Parliament. The bill is an important piece of the puzzle to ensure we have fairness with respect to temporary escorted absences for those in the care of Correctional Service Canada. It is past time that we had a discussion on what precisely is good reason to grant those serving prison sentences temporary escorted absences.

My bill would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act in a way that would modify the list of reasons why temporary escorted absences from prison are justified and granted.

Several years ago, our community was victimized by a convicted criminal who escaped from custody. The heartbreak that resulted should never happen again.

The bill applies specifically to high-risk offenders, as they are obviously most at risk of causing problems while away from prison. It would focus specifically on offenders classified in section 17 of the act.

I trust this will gain the support of members of the House.

I would like to thank my colleague, my brother, the member for Calgary Northeast.

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

\* \* \*

•(1010)

**NAVIGATION PROTECTION ACT**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-694, An Act to amend the Navigation Protection Act (Nanaimo River and Koksilah River).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing this private member's bill today to add the Koksilah and Nanaimo rivers to the Navigation Protection Act, because rivers on Vancouver Island are in trouble. Like most rivers on the west coast of North America, our rivers are suffering from drought conditions. A smaller than normal snowpack this winter meant very little spring freshets that feed these rivers.

The Koksilah River was once known for its run of steelhead, but overfishing in the 1980s nearly extirpated them from the river. Now impacts from logging, agriculture, and low summer flows continue to endanger its recovery. Along with the Cowichan River, the Koksilah drains into the Cowichan estuary, an important intertidal area that hosts migratory waterfowl, abundant eel grass beds, and the occasional otter. If summer flows are too low, the spawning salmon must be captured in Cowichan Bay and transported upriver to their spawning beds.

The Nanaimo River flows 78 km from its headwater on Mount Hooper to the Strait of Georgia. While it is celebrated as a great recreational river, it also provides drinking water to 86,000 residents. However, the surface water is only part of the story. The Cassidy aquifers are near the terminal end of the river. While the river recharges the aquifers during the high spring flows, the opposite happens in the late fall when the cool groundwater from the aquifers helps recharge the river, providing ideal conditions for salmon runs.

Sadly, there is no federal protection for either of these rivers, even though they both provide fish habitat for the west coast's iconic

salmon. That is why I propose that these two rivers should be added to the list of those protected by federal legislation under the Navigation Protection Act.

I want to thank my seconder, the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam. I also want to thank the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for his very strong support of the bill.

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

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS****IMPAIRED DRIVING**

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am usually honoured to present petitions. However, the petitions I present today sadly inform the House that the number one cause of criminal death in Canada is vehicular homicide. About 1,200 to 1,500 Canadians are killed every year by drunk drivers, people who decide to drive a vehicle while they are drunk.

Families for Justice is a group of Canadians who have had loved ones killed by an impaired driver. The petitioners believe that Canada's impaired driving laws are much too lenient. They want the crime to be called what it is, vehicular homicide. They are also calling upon Parliament to introduce mandatory sentences for vehicular homicide, which this Parliament has just done.

•(1015)

[*Translation*]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions.

The first petition calls on the government to respect the rights of small family farms to store, trade and use seed.

**LAC-MÉGANTIC**

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by people who suffered as a result of the Lac-Mégantic train derailment and its horrible after-effects. They are calling on the government to launch a public inquiry into the derailment of that train, which took 47 lives.

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

*Routine Proceedings*

The first petition is signed by over 150 people from my riding who support the initiative the NDP presented to Parliament to end violence against women, specifically by calling an inquiry into the murdered and missing aboriginal women.

## METRIC SYSTEM

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition was put together by a very active citizen in Pointe-de-l'Île. The petition calls for a regulatory change with regard to the application of the metric system.

We know that 94% of the world's population uses the international metric system and it is the only system that has been taught in our schools for over 35 years now. Canada should therefore drop any reference to any system other than the metric system in ads, on signs, and on packaging. The petitioners are also calling for containers to be standardized to the metric system in units of 100 grams or 100 millilitres.

This petition was signed by more than 100 people in my riding.  
[English]

## AGRICULTURE

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition that contains hundreds of names from my riding of Cardigan, Prince Edward Island. It was put together by the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, which asks the government to adopt international aid policies that support small farmers, especially women, and also ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with small farmers and that they protect the rights of small family farmers in the global south to preserve, use, and freely exchange seeds.

## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today.

The first petition involves Mr. Seyamak Naderi, a political prisoner who was jailed, tortured, and isolated from his family for more than 34 years in Iran and who is currently living in Albania as a refugee claimant in urgent need of care. I am told that Mr. Seyamak Naderi is in danger of being executed if he returns to Iran.

The petitioners call upon the House, the Government of Canada, and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to do everything within their power to expedite the recognition of Seyamak Naderi as a convention refugee and to reunite Saeideh Naderi with her brother as soon as possible.

## DRUGS PRESCRIBED TO CHILDREN

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition notes that in 2012 the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child raised concerns about the excessive amount of stimulants being prescribed to Canadian children. There has been a skyrocketing of psychotropic drug prescriptions for children and adolescents. Nearly 50% of children and youth in foster and group home care, age 5 to 10, have been prescribed drugs such as Ritalin and tranquilizers. The petitioners request that Parliament respond to this grave concern, conduct a national investigation into the use of psychotropic drugs among children, and enact legislation that

increases the rights of school children, children under the Crown, and children in foster care to refuse psychotropic drugs.

[Translation]

## CANADA POST

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of my constituents in Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, who are calling on the government to stop reducing Canada Post postal services because up to 8,000 well-paid jobs could be lost. Eliminating home delivery and reducing hours of service in rural areas will have an adverse effect on our people and the local economy.

• (1020)

## OPTIMIST MOVEMENT

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting four petitions on behalf of my constituents.

The first petition calls on Parliament to make the first Thursday of February a national optimist movement awareness day to support young people and help develop their potential.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls for the removal of the infamous *Kathryn Spirit*, the ship that has been lying on the shores of Beauharnois since 2011 and could well pollute Lake Saint-Louis, the drinking water reservoir of Beauharnois and the greater Montreal area. The petitioners want the Government of Canada to ensure that the boat is safely towed out of those waters as soon as possible.

## CANADA POST

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition calls on the Government of Canada to reject Canada Post's plan to reduce postal service and continue to provide an essential, basic public service. The petitioners want to protect this public service and the jobs and ensure that people can get their mail.

## CBC/RADIO-CANADA

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the fourth and last petition seeks to defend a public asset. It concerns the CBC and its future. The federal government is being asked to guarantee stable, adequate, multi-year funding for our broadcaster in order to maintain high-quality regional news.

\* \* \*

[English]

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1266, 1296, and 1315.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Text]

Question No. 1266—**Ms. Charmaine Borg:**

With regard to property No. 06872 in the Directory of Federal Real Property (DFRP), also known as the Old St-Maurice Firing Range, what is the decontamination plan for this site, which is located in Terrebonne, Quebec?

**Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence will remediate the Champ de tir-Saint-Maurice site in accordance with the Treasury Board of Canada policy on management of real property. The decontamination plan will be in line with the intended future use of the site when it is determined.

Question No. 1296—**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:**

With regard to future construction projects for national Correctional Service facilities: are there any plans to build new penitentiaries for the province of Quebec, more specifically in the constituency of Pontiac, and, if so, what phase are these projects at now?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are no plans to build new federal penitentiaries in the province of Quebec.

Question No. 1315—**Ms. Nicole Turmel:**

With regard to the government's processing of immigration applications, in particular the parents and grandparents super visa category: (a) what is the total average cost to government and time required to complete a single application; (b) how long did it take for the quota for parents and grandparents super visas to be reached; (c) how many applications for fiscal year 2015 were received; and (d) how many applications were rejected?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Citizenship and Immigration Canada, CIC, is concerned.

As part of phase I of the action plan for faster family reunification, the Government of Canada created the parent and grandparent super visa in December 2011. Since its launch, over 50,000 parent and grandparent super visas have been issued. With close to 1,200 super visas being approved monthly, this remains one of CIC's most popular programs.

For the first part of (a), regarding what is the total average cost to government, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, CIC, does not specifically track the cost of processing a parents and grandparents super visa. That said, the \$100 fee charged to applicants is intended to cover the cost of verifying that various criteria are met and in line with costs of processing a standard temporary resident visa, approximately \$108 per applicant.

For the second part of question (a) regarding the time required to complete a single application, CIC uses processing times to measure the time it took for a completed application to be processed. This measure is based on how long it took to process 80% of all cases for a given time period. For parents and grandparents super visa applications finalized from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014, 80% of cases were finalized within 77 days or less.

Regarding (b), how long did it take for the quota for parents and grandparents super visas to be reached, there is no such quota.

Regarding (c) how many applications for fiscal year 2015 were received, and (d) how many applications were rejected, the total parents and grandparents super visa applications received in fiscal

year 2014-15 is 22,200. Of these, 4,415 applications were rejected for one or more reasons.

The data source is CISEDW, EDW as of May 12, 2015

\* \* \*

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Questions Nos. 1261, 1276, 1283, 1284, 1286, 1290 to 1292, 1294, 1298, 1300 to 1303, 1304, 1306, 1308, 1311, 1312 and 1317 to 1319 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1261—**Mr. Andrew Cash:**

With regard to individuals detained under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act: (a) broken down by province and by gender, how many individuals were detained in the years (i) 2011, (ii) 2012, (iii) 2013, (iv) 2014; (b) what was the cost of detaining the individuals in (a) for the years (i) 2011, (ii) 2012, (iii) 2013, (iv) 2014; (c) broken down by province, how many of the individuals in (a) were under the age of six in the years (i) 2011, (ii) 2012, (iii) 2013, (iv) 2014; (d) broken down by province, how many of the individuals in (a) were between the ages of six and nine in the years (i) 2011, (ii) 2012, (iii) 2013, (iv) 2014; (e) broken down by province, how many of the individuals in (a) were between the ages of ten and 12 in the years (i) 2011, (ii) 2012, (iii) 2013, (iv) 2014; (f) broken down by province, how many of the individuals in (a) were between the ages of 13 and 17 in the years (i) 2011, (ii) 2012, (iii) 2013, (iv) 2014; (g) broken down by province, what is the average duration of stay in detention; (h) of those who were in detention between January 2011 and January 2015 how many individuals have remained in detention longer than (i) one year, (ii) two years, (iii) three years, (iv) four years, (v) five years; and (i) as of the most recent information, how many individuals are detained in cells with (i) one other person, (ii) two other persons, (iii) three other persons, (iv) four or more other persons?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1276—**Ms. Christine Moore:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 awarded by Health Canada since April 1, 2014: what is (i) the name of the supplier, (ii) the contract reference number, (iii) the contract date, (iv) the description of services provided, (v) the delivery date, (vi) the original contract amount, (vii) the final contract amount, if different from the original amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1283—**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:**

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Public Works and Government Services Canada since February 5, 2015: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1284—**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:**

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Justice Canada since January 29, 2015: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

## Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1286—**Hon. Irwin Cotler:**

With regard to designated countries of origin (DCO): (a) what is the process for removing a country from the DCO list; (b) does the government conduct regular reviews of countries on the DCO list to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria for designation; (c) if the government does not conduct regular reviews of countries on the DCO list to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria for designation, (i) how is a review triggered, (ii) who decides whether to conduct a review, (iii) based on what factors is the decision to conduct a review made; (d) since the inception of the DCO list, has the government conducted any reviews of countries on the list to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria for designation; (e) for each review in (d), (i) what was the country, (ii) when did the review begin, (iii) when did the review end, (iv) how was the review triggered, (v) who decided to conduct the review, (vi) who conducted the review, (vii) what documents were consulted, (viii) what groups or individuals were consulted, (ix) what ministers or ministers' offices were involved in the review, (x) what was the nature of any ministerial involvement, (xi) what was the outcome, (xii) based on what factors was the outcome determined; (f) based on what factors does the government decide whether to remove a country from the DCO list; (g) in what ways does the government monitor the human rights situation in countries on the DCO list to ensure that the countries continue to meet the criteria for designation; (h) who does the monitoring in (g); (i) what weight is given to the situation of minority groups in countries on the DCO list when evaluating whether the countries continue to meet the criteria for designation; (j) what weight is given to the situation of political dissidents in countries on the DCO list when evaluating whether the countries continue to meet the criteria for designation; (k) what type or extent of change in the human rights situation in a country on the DCO list would trigger a review of whether the country continues to meet the criteria for designation; (l) what type or extent of change in the situation of one or more minority groups in a country on the DCO list would trigger a review of whether the country continues to meet the criteria for designation; (m) what type or extent of change in the situation of political dissidents in a country on the DCO list would trigger a review of whether the country continues to meet the criteria for designation; (n) what type or extent of change in the human rights situation in a country on the DCO list would lead to the removal of the country from the list; (o) what type or extent of change in the situation of one or more minority groups in a country on the DCO list would lead to the removal of the country from the list; (p) what type or extent of change in the situation of political dissidents in a country on the DCO list would lead to the removal of the country from the list; (q) in what ways does the government discourage refugee claims from countries on the DCO list; (r) since the inception of the list, how much money has the government spent outside Canada to discourage refugee claims from countries on the DCO list, broken down by year and country where the money was spent; (s) since the inception of the list, how much money has the government spent within Canada to discourage refugee claims from countries on the DCO list, broken down by year, province or territory where the money was spent, and DCO country in question; (t) since the inception of the list, how much money has the government spent on advertising outside Canada to discourage refugee claims from countries on the DCO list, broken down by year and country where the money was spent; (u) since the inception of the list, how much money has the government spent on advertising within Canada to discourage refugee claims from countries on the DCO list, broken down by year, province or territory where the money was spent, and DCO country in question; (v) what evaluations has the government conducted of the advertising in (t) and (u); (w) for each evaluation in (v), (i) when did it begin, (ii) when was it completed, (iii) who conducted it, (iv) what were its objectives, (v) what were its outcomes, (vi) how much did it cost; (x) for each year since the inception of the list, how many refugee claims have been made by claimants from countries on the DCO list, broken down by country of origin; (y) for each year since the inception of the list, broken down by country of origin, how many of the claims in (x) were (i) accepted, (ii) rejected, (iii) abandoned, (iv) withdrawn; (z) for each year since the inception of the list, broken down by country of origin, how many of the failed claimants in (y) sought a review of their claim in Federal Court; (aa) for each year since the inception of the list, broken down by country of origin, how many of the claimants in (z) were removed from Canada while their claim remained pending in Federal Court; (bb) for each year since the inception of the list, broken down by country of origin, how many of the claimants in (z) left Canada while their claim remained pending in Federal Court; (cc) for each year since the inception of the list, broken down by country of origin, how many refugee claimants from countries on the DCO list have been deported; (dd) has the government monitored the situation of any failed refugee claimants from countries on the DCO list after they returned to their countries of origin; (ee) broken down by DCO country, how many failed claimants have been the objects of the monitoring in (dd); (ff) broken down by DCO country, regarding the monitoring of each failed claimant in (ee), (i) when did it begin, (ii) when did it end, (iii) who did it, (iv) what was its objective, (v) what was

its outcome; (gg) broken down by year and country of origin, how many refugee claims by claimants from countries on the DCO list were accepted by the Federal Court after having been denied by the Immigration and Refugee Board; (hh) broken down by year and country of origin, how many of the claims in (gg) were accepted by the Federal Court after the claimant had left Canada; (ii) broken down by country of origin, how many of the claimants in (hh) now reside in Canada; (jj) what evaluations has the government conducted of the DCO system; (kk) for each evaluation in (jj), (i) when did it begin, (ii) when was it completed, (iii) who conducted it, (iv) what were its objectives, (v) what were its outcomes, (vi) how much did it cost; (ll) since the inception of the DCO list, what groups and individuals has the government consulted about the impact of the DCO list; (mm) for each consultation in (ll), (i) when did it occur, (ii) how did it occur, (iii) what recommendations were made to the government, (iv) what recommendations were implemented by the government?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1290—**Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to hydrocarbon spills in Canada's waters by commercial entities: (a) how many spills of oil, gas, petrochemical products or fossil fuels have been reported in Canada's oceans, rivers, lakes or other waterways, broken down by year since 2006; and (b) for each reported spill in (a), identify (i) the product spilled, (ii) the volume of the spill, (iii) the location of the spill, (iv) the name of the commercial entity associated with the spill?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1291—**Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to government-supported, rental housing in Canada: (a) how many new units were built using federal funding from the Investment in Affordable Housing bilateral agreements, since 2006, broken down by (i) unit size, (ii) province, (iii) year; (b) how many new units were built using federal funding from the National Homelessness Initiative, since 2006, broken down by (i) province, (ii) year; (c) how many new units were built using federal funding under the auspices of any other program, since 2006, broken down by (i) unit size, (ii) year; (d) how many Proposal Development Funding loans were granted by the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation, since 2006, broken down by (i) province, (iii) year; and (e) how many Seed Funding grants were granted by the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation, broken down by (i) value under \$10,000, (ii) value over \$10,000?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1292—**Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to the Live-in Caregiver and Caregiver programs, broken down by year, from 2010 to 2014: (a) how many applications were received by Citizenship and Immigration Canada; (b) how many applications for Live-in Caregiver and Caregiver visas were approved; (c) how many Canadian residents with Live-in Caregiver or Caregiver visas applied for permanent residency; (d) how many permanent residency applications by Live-in Caregiver or Caregiver visa-holders were approved; (e) what are the top three source countries for live-in caregivers in Canada; and (f) how many residents with Live-in Caregiver visas applied to sponsor their spouses or children, broken down by (i) raw numbers, (ii) percentage of the total?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1294—**Mr. Nathan Cullen:**

With respect to the Canada Border Services Agency's decision to close the border crossing between Stewart, British Columbia and Hyder, Alaska for eight hours per day, effective April 1, 2015: (a) what is the cost of keeping the border crossing open 24 hours per day; (b) what is the expected savings from this decision; (c) how many entries and exits have occurred at this border entry since April 1, 2005; and (d) what consultations were undertaken by the Canada Border Services Agency with the District of Stewart in advance of this decision being taken?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1298—Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:**

With regard to the investments made in forestry companies in the riding of Pontiac since 2011, (a) how many projects received funding through federal programs such as Canada Economic Development; and (b) of the projects identified in (a), what is the total amount of these investments, broken down by company?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1300—Hon. Ralph Goodale:**

With regard to the following telephone services (i) Service Canada's (SC) "1-800 O Canada", (ii) SC's "Canada Pension Plan (CPP)", (iii) SC's "Employer Contact Centre", SC's "Employment Insurance (EI)", (iv) SC's "Old Age Security (OAS)", (v) SC's "Passports", (vi) Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) "Individual income tax and trust enquiries", (vii) CRA's "Business enquiries", (viii) CRA's "Canada Child Tax Benefit enquiries", (ix) CRA's "Goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax (GST/HST) credit enquiries" for the previous fiscal year and the current fiscal year to date: (a) what are the service standards and performance indicators; (b) how many calls met the service standards and performance indicators; (c) how many did not meet the service standards and performance indicators; (d) how many calls went through; (e) how many calls did not go through; (f) how does the government monitor for cases such as in (e); (g) what is the accuracy of the monitoring identified in (f); and (h) how long was the average caller on hold?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1303—Ms. Éloïse Michaud:**

With regard to government funding, provided by the Department of the Environment, in the riding of Portneuf-Jacques-Cartier since 2011-2012 inclusively, what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1304—Ms. Éloïse Michaud:**

With regard to government funding granted by the Department of Employment and Social Development, including the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in the constituency of Portneuf-Jacques-Cartier since 2011-2012 inclusively, what are the details of all grants, contributions and loans to any organization, body or group, broken down by (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the municipality of the recipient, (iii) the date on which the funding was received, (iv) the amount received, (v) the department or agency providing the funding, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, and (vii) the nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1306—Ms. Éloïse Michaud:**

With regard to government funding granted by the Department of Infrastructure, including the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, in the constituency of Portneuf-Jacques-Cartier since 2011-2012 inclusively, what are the details of all grants, contributions and loans to any organization, body or group, broken down by (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the municipality of the recipient, (iii) the date on which the funding was received, (iv) the amount received, (v) the department or agency providing the funding, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, and (vii) the nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1308—Ms. Nycol Turmel:**

With regard to Infrastructure Canada, from fiscal year 2011-2012 up to and including the current fiscal year, broken down by fiscal year, what was the total amount allocated, including direct investment from the Government of Canada, in (a) the City of Gatineau, broken down by (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the amount allocated to the recipient, (iii) the program under which the amount was allocated; (b) the federal constituency of Hull-Aylmer (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the amount allocated to the recipient, (iii) the program under which the amount was allocated; and (c) the administrative region of Outaouais (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the

amount allocated to the recipient, (iii) the program under which the amount was allocated?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1311—Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre:**

With regard to the advisory council created by the government in 2012 mandated to promote women on the boards of public and private corporations: (a) in total, how many individuals are on this advisory council, broken down by (i) gender, (ii) name, (iii) position; (b) when did the meetings take place; (c) what were the subjects discussed by this council; (d) what is the expected date for this council's report; (e) what was discussed during this council's meetings with respect to (i) pay equity, (ii) the representation of women on the boards of public and private corporations; and (f) can the government table the minutes of this advisory council's meetings?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1312—Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre:**

With regard to the Canada Post service reductions announced in December 2013: (a) what are the planned locations for community mailboxes in Laval; (b) how many employees were assigned to Laval before the elimination of home delivery was announced; (c) how many Canada Post employees will be required following the mailbox transition; (d) what was the volume of mail sent in the last ten years (i) from Laval to another destination, (ii) to Laval; (e) how many complaints have been received concerning (i) the transition from home delivery to community mailboxes, (ii) the location of community mailboxes in Laval; (f) how many complaints resulted in (i) an opened file, (ii) a change of location of these community mailboxes; (g) what steps are being taken to look after the needs of (i) persons with mobility impairments, (ii) seniors; (h) will current post offices still be active following the transition to community mailboxes; (i) what recourse will be available to residents affected by the location of mailboxes they consider to be dangerous or harmful; (j) what recourse was or continues to be available to residents affected by the installation of a community mailbox over the last 30 years, excluding the current transition; and (k) how many customer service employees at Canada Post, broken down by language of service, are assigned to complaints concerning the installation of community mailboxes from (i) across Canada, (ii) Quebec, (iii) Laval, (iv) the residents of Alfred-Pellan?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1317—Hon. Stéphane Dion:**

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Canadian Heritage since January 30, 2015: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1318—Hon. Stéphane Dion:**

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Natural Resources Canada since February 5, 2015: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1319—Mr. Jack Harris:**

With regard to the United Nations Chiefs of Defence Conference of March 26-27, 2015, at the United Nations headquarters in New York City, and the absence of Chief of Defence Staff of the Canadian Armed Forces, General Thomas Lawson, from the Conference: (a) what was the reason for General Lawson's absence; (b) which members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development were present at the Conference; and (c) what measures were taken to communicate Canada's priorities and concerns with regard to international peacekeeping to those present at the Conference?

(Return tabled)



*Government Orders*

[English]

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

---

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BARBARIC CULTURAL PRACTICES ACT

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC)** moved that 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, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as I think every member of the House knows, it is a core obligation of Parliament and of governments in Canada to support, and when necessary, to reform our immigration system to ensure that it drives Canada's growth and economic success, as it has always done. That is exactly what this government has done over nine very productive years.

Second, it is a key obligation of governments in this country to continue Canada's long and distinguished humanitarian tradition to make sure that we are at the forefront of efforts to respond to suffering in the world, to meet the needs of the vulnerable, and for as many as can we support, to resettle refugees and asylum seekers on our shores.

That is the story at the very heart of who we are as Canadians. It has been there from the beginning, from the days when French speaking settlers came to Canada fleeing wars of religion in Europe and the days when English speaking loyalists came to Canada from the United States seeking a better life and seeking to continue to embrace the values they held sacred. They were values of responsible government, self-government, respect for human dignity, respect for the rule of law, and in the case of the loyalists, allegiance to the crown.

That story of humanitarian engagement has been central to our immigration system from the beginning, and we have a responsibility to renew that system.

However, we cannot achieve either of these goals if we turn a blind eye to the mistreatment of those in any of our immigration programs. We cannot achieve either of those goals if we pretend that Canada is somehow immune to global trends that lead to abuse, movements of people against their will, and violence. It is violence that is sometimes masked in very sophisticated ways by sweet-talking husbands, sophisticated consultants, and groups that have an economic interest, or sometimes a political and non-economic motive, to move people against their will, to violate their rights, to take them across borders, and to compel them to undertake important decisions against their will.

That is why, over our nine years in office, we have never hesitated to take action to ensure the integrity of our immigration and citizenship programs. That is why we, on this side of the House, are very proud to be debating Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act, which would do just that. It would bolster our defences against forms of violence, abuse, and human smuggling that are all too current in today's world. Given Canada's intimate ties with every part of the world, the strength of our immigration programs, and the number of visitors to this country, these are phenomena from which we are far from invulnerable. They affect us in this country, and this bill would do an enormous amount to combat them.

What would Bill S-7 do that has not already been done? We are building on a legacy of success in this regard in Canada. It would lift the whole question of polygamy, which already results in criminal sanctions under the Criminal Code, to the level of a principle of inadmissibility to Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. It would, quite simply, make it much easier for us to keep polygamists out of Canada when they try to enter, either openly or by attempting to disguise polygamist relationships and multiple marriages.

● (1025)

Second, and this is perhaps the most dramatic provision, because it is potentially relevant to every Canadian, the bill would raise the national minimum age for marriage to 16. I think many of us on this side of the House, and many Canadians, were not aware of the fact that there was no minimum age in Canada under the Civil Marriage Act, under federal legislation. In nine provinces and territories, except for Quebec, the minimum age to marry has not been determined to be 16 by provincial or territorial legislation either. Therefore, this is a very positive step that literally takes us out of the Middle Ages on this front.

The bill would give us tools to combat early and forced marriage and very nefarious forms of the compulsion to marry for women and girls, which can lead to a lifetime of misery, violence, and sexual abuse.

Third, the bill would create a formal requirement for those marrying to dissolve all previous unions. That would become part of the Civil Marriage Act. In a country where polygamy has been illegal and where it has long been only legal to be married to one person, it would seem to be self-evident that this change must take place. I think common sense has prevailed, but given recent experience, we need it to be a formal requirement in the Civil Marriage Act that all previous unions be dissolved.

Why is that? It is because sometimes these unions take place far from Canada's shores. Sometimes they have taken place in a way that was not formally registered with civil authorities, even in that country of origin. Sometimes those wishing to disguise their polygamist relationships as other forms of kinship with family members will go to great lengths to maintain a second or third union that was consummated in another country. We need to formally require, for the sake of women of girls and for the sake of Canadian values, to dissolve any previous unions.

*Government Orders*

Fourth, and this really is at the core of this bill, Bill S-7 would require those marrying to give their free and enlightened consent. We cannot emphasize enough how important this principle of the bill is.

It is not enough simply to stand in a ceremony with loved ones and family to consummate a marriage. It is not enough to have a religious ceremony or a civil ceremony, with all the formalities that involves. The public aspect is important, obviously. The traditional aspect is important. There is a wide variety of marriage traditions in Canada, religious and otherwise, all of which are welcome on our shores. However, if the person standing in that wedding ceremony repeating those vows in public maintains a private conviction that she or he has not chosen that marriage or voluntarily entered into that union, that is when forced marriage happens.

We know that forced marriage is happening on a large scale. We know from NGOs, settlement agencies, Canadians, and committee testimony that this is the case. It is not happening widely in a huge percentage of marriages, but hundreds of cases we know of, and thousands of cases we suspect, have involved payments for one family to oblige one of its members to marry into another. There is compulsion, such as the threat of violence, physical abuse, exclusion, or financial abandonment. These are the kinds of things that lead women and girls, and sometimes men and boys, to enter into marriages without having given their free and enlightened consent. We must speak for these victims of the crime of forced marriage.

● (1030)

It is a crime in Canada, but we must speak up further to Bill S-7 to ensure that free and enlightened consent is given in each and every case and that anyone who is complicit in a marriage in which free and enlightened consent has not been given will face the criminal justice system.

This bill criminalizes active and knowing participation in a forced marriage or the removal of a person from Canada for purposes of underage or forced marriage. In other words, if a parent, God forbid, or an agent who is receiving financial benefit for a forced marriage or someone who is in a relationship of influence or intimidation or has even threatened one of the parties to the marriage actively and knowingly facilitates a forced marriage, a union in which free and enlightened consent has not been given, under Bill S-7 that person would face consequences under the Criminal Code of Canada.

We are also seeking to limit the defence of provocation, because honour, in whatever form, is not an excuse for violence. We do not want Canada to be a country where a crime takes place and the explanation given either by the defendant or the defendant's lawyer in court or in public is that the violence happened because someone had been dishonoured. There are no words that can be uttered, no insults that can be given, no failure of conjugal duty or duty in a marriage that can justify violence.

This defence of provocation has not been successful in many cases in Canada. There has been perhaps one case in which a conviction was downgraded from murder to manslaughter, but it is still used in innumerable cases to explain violent behaviour and it still accepted in courts as a legitimate defence that deserves to be heard. That is absurd in this day and age, and after the passage of Bill S-7, it would no longer be permitted.

The defence of provocation will be limited to cases in which the victims themselves have, on the evidence, committed an indictable crime that would be punishable by up to five years imprisonment. In other words, if the victims themselves commit a serious act of violence that led to other violence, then that needs to be part of the case. That needs to be part of the chain of events that led to the result, whatever it is. That needs to be taken into consideration, but not words, not gestures, not failure to perform in a marriage, and certainly not honour-based arguments of any kind.

Finally, this bill would establish access to peace bonds to prevent forced or underage marriage and prevent the removal of persons from Canada for those purposes.

Why is that important? It is important because these crimes are often committed in very intimate settings, in family settings, among people who really do love one another and depend on one another, and who, for whatever reason, have strayed from the path of mutual respect and have forced a family member into marriage. It is then very difficult for one member of a family to press charges against another and take the other to court, even when a forced marriage happens and a criminal act has been committed, because criminal charges would be brought and a conviction might very well follow.

Peace bonds allow a different option. They allow for the behaviour of those who would commit forced removals or engage in forced or underage marriages to be regulated with the supervision of the justice system without recourse to a criminal case and the conviction and punishment that would go with that.

● (1035)

As we know in Canada, from a wide variety of phenomena that need to be addressed through the criminal justice system, peace bonds are an important tool. We hope to see them actively used as a result of Bill S-7 to literally stamp out and eliminate the phenomenon of underage and forced marriage from Canada as quickly as possible.

I should also say that there are changes to regulations that have been brought as a result of Bill S-7 or in conjunction with Bill S-7. Requirements in our spousal sponsorship program and our family reunification program are now stronger than ever in Canada.

Thanks to those generous programs, 70,000 family members are being brought to Canada as permanent residents in this year alone. However, as a result of our actions under this bill, it would no longer be possible to sponsor a spouse from abroad who is under the age of 18 to be a permanent resident. That is because 18 is the age of majority in this country. It is the age for free and enlightened consent from persons being married or who are already married. The consent does not come from their parents.

The spousal sponsorship program has been subject to abuse. We do face marriages of convenience and forced marriage on a wide scale beyond our borders, and we do face cases of marriage fraud all too often. We need to limit spousal sponsorship to those 18 and over in order to address these issues as effectively as we possibly can.

I am very proud to be part of a team that has brought this bill together relatively quickly. It took work across government. The Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women were involved in the elaboration of this bill. John Baird, the former minister of foreign affairs, brought his great familiarity and activism on forced marriage globally to bear on this bill, which will have a decisive effect, we hope, on the phenomenon of forced marriage domestically. This product has moved through Parliament only thanks to the work of my colleagues and thanks to the chairman of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, the member of Parliament for Dufferin—Caledon, who has been running that committee effectively for nine years in the most prolific era of reform for Canada's immigration, citizenship, passport, and refugee programs in Canadian history.

We started with the reform of the asylum system. If we had stayed with the Liberal tradition that we inherited in 2006, we would have seen our asylum claims dominated by claimants from safe countries.

• (1040)

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** It would be in great shape.

**Hon. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, I hear the hon. member for Guelph saying it was in great shape. He thinks it is great for three or four countries of origin among the top 10 source countries for asylum seekers to be countries from the European Union. He thinks our asylum system should be—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Guelph is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Guelph was diligently working at his desk and made no comment whatsoever. If the member is going to make comments, can he please make them correctly and direct them to the right person?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. That was not a point of order.

The hon. minister has about a minute and a half to finish.

**Hon. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, it may have been the member for Winnipeg North, but they all share the same view. They all want our asylum system to be focused on economic migrants, on people from safe countries. We have restored the focus of Canada's generosity to asylum seekers by offering it to those who are from countries that are truly in conflict, where people truly face persecution on a massive scale, as we are now seeing a rise in numbers of people from Syria, Iraq, Somalia, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, et cetera.

Second, we reformed our economic immigration programs. We reduced backlogs. We sped up the process. We now have express entry.

Third, we brought in the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, the first thoroughgoing attempt in a generation to reinforce the value of Canadian citizenship, to ensure that attachment is strong, and to ensure that integrity is at the centre of our citizenship programs.

### *Government Orders*

Finally, we brought in Bill S-7, which caps a whole range of efforts to protect those in our immigration systems, and above all, in this case, to protect women and girls.

We are proud to have done this. It is historic. It will ensure that Canada continues to be a leader in this field for years to come.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his speech.

Many parts of the bill criminalize people who could be considered victims in this tragedy of forced marriage. Unfortunately, as we have seen with a number of bills—for example, the prostitution bill introduced by this government—criminalizing the victims would not only marginalize them even further in these situations, but would have the opposite effect and frighten the victims. In fact, they could decide not to report these crimes. In the end, the victims would remain in this vicious circle that the minister described and defined so well because when you tell a victim that her family will be incarcerated and that she, too, could be charged, then you have failed to protect the victims.

I would like the minister to explain why the government chose the approach of criminalization rather than an approach that protects victims.

• (1045)

**Hon. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform the hon. member that she is wrong. She probably has much more formal training and legal knowledge than I, but she is wrong in this case when she says that we are criminalizing anyone who could be considered a victim.

What is new in this bill is that it will criminalize those who facilitate forced marriage and early marriage. Yes, those who marry will have to dissolve previous unions and give their free and informed consent. However, the only other criminal penalties are for those who facilitate forced or early marriage.

We certainly want to encourage greater respect and better protection for victims through various measures in this bill and the other reforms we have brought about in recent years.

[*English*]

Let us remember what people like Kamal Dhillon, who testified at committee, wrote in her own account of the violence she faced as a result of forced marriage:

I was violently raped by him on our honeymoon night. From the wedding night onward, I was subjected to emotional, physical, sexual, and financial abuse that occurred several times per week, and he even attempted to murder me several times.

As a result of his beatings and his rage, I now live in constant pain with an artificial jaw....

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

All of the people who facilitated the forced marriage of this woman should be brought to justice and face criminal penalties.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from his seat the Prime Minister heckles across the floor that “it might not be the truth but it sure sounds good” in referring to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration's comments. I must admit I am somewhat surprised that no member would stand up to defend the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, because in fact it was not necessarily true.

I admit that what I just finished saying was not necessarily true. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration will stand in his place and put all sorts of falsehoods on the record that are not true. I guess what we are looking for is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to be a little more straightforward with the facts.

We can give many different examples, but let me speak strictly to his comments in the speech that he just delivered. He makes reference to issues and blames the problems of the department of immigration on the Liberal administration of 10 years ago. Would he not agree that after 10 years of Conservative government, the problems in immigration today are not because of the Liberal government of 10 years ago, but because of his performance and the performance of the previous Conservative minister of immigration?

He needs to recognize that truth and start fixing the problems that he and his government have created.

**Hon. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, that is obviously nonsense. It has been only nine and a half years, but this government has presided over the most dynamic period of reform in Canadian immigration history. The Liberals over a generation cheapened our citizenship. They opened our economic immigration programs to abuse and to backlogs, and they left open the door to the forms of abuse to which they are not even prepared to face up to today.

The first question from the Liberal Party on the bill at third reading makes no mention of forced marriage, underage marriage, honour killings or polygamy. These are all criminal acts, phenomena that exist in our immigration system, unfortunately, which the Liberal Party over its many years in government did absolutely nothing to oppose or eradicate.

The Liberals opposed this bill until they realized which way the wind was blowing, until they spoke to some women and girls, perhaps even to those who were victims of these acts. They understood that opposition to the bill was absolutely reprehensible, unacceptable in this day and age in a world where hundreds of millions of women and girls face forced marriage.

Canada is very active on behalf of them to seek to address their plight. We even accept many of these women and girls in Canada as refugees fleeing that kind of misery abroad.

The Liberals would have us do absolutely nothing to address these phenomena when they show up in our own immigration programs. It says a lot about their time in government and the legacy they left us.

● (1050)

**Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the outstanding minister for his dedication on this file. To his point that when one lays poor foundations, oftentimes what happens is those foundations have to be rebuilt. Those poor foundations left by the Liberals are being rebuilt by the minister right now, so I thank him for that work.

The bill sends a clear message to individuals coming to our country that harmful, violent, barbaric practices are unacceptable. These practices are incompatible with our Canadian values and will not be tolerated. The minister has consulted from coast to coast to coast and yet the minister in his speech has also said that we know of people still trying to perpetuate these intolerant practices. Polygamy is one example of that. It was outlawed in 1890, and still it is perpetuated today. We have to work very hard to get a grip on that.

Would the minister expand on that?

**Hon. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Etobicoke Centre for his great work in the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and for his dedication to these files along with many other members on our side, without whom bills like this, Bill C-24, the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act and Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act, would simply not have seen the light of day.

Let us draw the contrast. Let us take the case of Shafias, multiple murders, tragic case from Kingston, Ontario. The member for Pierrefonds—Dollard asked what would have been the effect on them of this bill if it had been in place say under a Liberal government, say 10 years ago when we came into office. The amendment to IRPA would have deemed Mohammad Shafia and his wife inadmissible in the first place. They might not ever have gotten here. The amendment to the Criminal Code would not even have allowed the defence of provocation to be used at that time. The amendments to the Civil Marriage Act would have protected the children from early and forced marriage. As we recall, there were multiple cases in that tragic chapter.

Finally, the requirement for dissolution of previous marriage would have protected people like Rona Amir who were not protected when a second marriage took place and the previous one had not been annulled or dissolved.

These actions, which, if we had taken them earlier in Parliament, would have saved lives and would certainly have reduced the misery of women and girls. They are not the majority. They are not even a large share of those who come to our country as immigrants or who live in our country, but they are hundreds and indeed thousands who have suffered from these terrible practices that lead to lifetimes of violence.

The Liberal Party did nothing about it in its time in office. The NDP still opposes these measures today. It is very clear who in this Parliament is standing up for the protection of women and girls at home and in our immigration system.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House once again to speak to 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.

As the minister just said, the NDP does oppose this bill. In my speech, I will explain why it is important for all members of the House to oppose this bill if they really care about protecting women and victims of forced marriage, polygamy and early marriage.

I want to start by saying that the NDP supports the intent of this bill. I am making a point of mentioning this because a number of members have accused us of not supporting women or of not explicitly condemning violence against women. On the contrary, the NDP acknowledges that the crimes we have addressed in the debate on Bill S-7 are unacceptable, cruel and barbaric, if members insist on using that word. Forced marriage, polygamy, early marriage and honour crimes are all crimes that we must combat. I do not think the issue here is whether we recognize the seriousness of these crimes, but rather what is the best way to address them. I would even say that the issue is to determine which of the methods proposed in Bill S-7 could hurt victims. We really need to consider that. The consequences go beyond not having tools that are powerful enough; victims could end up being hurt. Today's debate is therefore very important. We need to listen to the many experts who work in the field and to the Criminal Code experts who raised some red flags and who told us that we needed to reconsider some aspects of this bill.

Some aspects of Bill S-7 are fine just the way they are, and the NDP is prepared to support them. However, at report stage, the NDP asked that four clauses be removed from the bill, which is not a lot. If the House had adopted the NDP's amendments, we would have voted in favour of Bill S-7. We agree with a number of measures that are included in the bill, for example, the fact that it sets a minimum age for marriage and makes officiating a forced marriage a criminal offence. The NDP is not opposed to such measures.

As I said earlier, there are four measures that need to be removed from this bill and examined more closely to ensure that they are not contrary to the intent of Bill S-7 and that they do not further penalize women in forced marriages, for example.

Bill S-7 was examined by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. Many experts came to testify. Experts, victims, women and men from all walks of life and with different areas of expertise appeared before us. It is unfortunate to see that, after being examined in the Senate, in committee and at report stage, Bill S-7 is still exactly the same as it was when it was first introduced. No amendments have been made. That is unbelievable. That brings into question the real purpose of examining bills in committee or even debating them here in the House of Commons. We have such a stubborn and ideological Conservative government. It presents bills that originated in the Senate and then makes us study them under time allocation. These are important bills that could give victims certain tools or even take away some of their power. These are fundamental issues that we need to seriously consider.

It is unbelievable that when the bill was being studied in committee, a vast majority of the witnesses told us that it had some

significant flaws, but the bill is once again before us and the Conservatives did not agree to a single amendment. Some will say that there were consultations before the bill was introduced. That may be the case, but these consultations were done in private and the minister sent direct invitations. Many people would have liked to have participated in these consultations, but since they were not invited by the minister they were not able to speak. How did they choose the witnesses who participated in these consultations, and what was actually said? We will never know.

● (1055)

What is the real purpose of these consultations? I think they serve partisan purposes so that the Conservatives can promote themselves as a political party. One has to wonder.

I would now like to talk about some of the flaws in this bill. First there is the short title. This bill's offensive title is probably the first thing we heard the public talking about. I remind members that the short title of this bill is the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act.

The long title is very specific, since it explicitly states what the bill would amend. The long title is 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. This is a clear title that accurately describes the nature of the bill.

Why did the government choose this short title? I repeat, the short title is the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act.

What is the purpose of a short title? There are some doubts about the need for such a title. Quite frankly, we have to wonder why the Conservatives insist on moving ahead with this short title when it is controversial and risks alienating the key players we need to combat violence against women.

I would like to quote a few of the experts who appeared in committee and who called on the government to reconsider the title. Ms. Miville-Dechéne, president of Quebec's Conseil du statut de la femme, had this to say:

...we need communities to be with us and not against us. That is why the title of this legislation must absolutely be changed.

What she is trying to say, if I were to summarize her comments on the short title, is that having the words "barbaric" and "cultural" in the same title is offensive to some people, because they feel as though their entire culture is being described as barbaric.

I am sure that was not the Conservatives' intention, but if that is how it is interpreted by people on the ground and by communities and cultural groups, then we need to reconsider the matter, because we will not get anywhere with a title like that if it creates enemies.

Another expert shared the same opinion. Avvy Yao-Yao Go, the clinic director of Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, said the following:

...Bill S-7 invokes racist stereotypes and fuels xenophobia towards certain racialized communities.

*Government Orders*

These people have eyes and ears on the ground because they work there every day. It is important to listen to them. Unfortunately, the government did not do so.

I will not spend any more time talking about the short title because there are other aspects of this bill that are also quite problematic. Let us look at those pertaining to forced marriage.

As I said earlier, the NDP is not opposed to making the celebration of a forced marriage a criminal offence. In short, if officiants, priests, imams and others knowingly celebrate a forced marriage, they could be charged under the Criminal Code. That makes sense to us.

Things get dangerous because Bill S-7 also contains a measure under which the people who attend a forced marriage or know that it may be a forced marriage can be charged under the Criminal Code. That is a problem.

Let us be clear. The NDP is not opposed to criminalizing an act as unacceptable as forced marriage. However, the question is what to do about it and how to proceed.

One of the basic problems with forced marriage is that it happens in secret and is accepted by people who will not seek help or speak out against such a practice. If the 100, 200 or 500 wedding guests could face criminal charges, then how are we going to do anything about this culture of secrecy? How are we going to encourage people to come forward so that criminal charges can be laid?

Many experts told us that this was a dangerous way of doing things. I would like to quote Dr. Lamboley, who did her doctoral thesis on the very specific subject of the express criminalization of forced marriage in Canada. This expert conducted an in-depth examination of the practices that exist elsewhere and the resources currently available in Canada, and she came to a conclusion on the issue. Everyone here will agree that her opinion should at least be taken into consideration.

One of the things she said was that:

...the express criminalization of this type of conjugal union does not appear to be a solution.

• (1100)

Why? She said that, first, we do not fully understand the problem and we need to understand the problem before we can address it. For example, we do not know the extent of the problem here in Canada. That would be important to know. We do not have a specific enough common definition of what constitutes forced marriage and what exactly it is that we want to punish. We need to understand all these issues before we go ahead with solutions.

She also said:

Canada is not without means to face this issue already, to the extent that it is possible to intervene legally under the criminal system to sanction reprehensible actions that arise in a large number of situations in forced marriages (threats, aggression, sexual assault, kidnapping, confinement, false marriages, extortion, intimidation, battery, murder, attempted murder, and so on).

All these measures are already in the Criminal Code. She said that if we currently do not understand the phenomenon and if we do not put anything new in place to help victims, then criminalization is not the way to go. She also reminded us that in the United Kingdom, victims are currently allowed to choose a civil process if they wish.

Indeed, a victim can choose between a criminal process and a civil process.

We need to understand that the person is the victim of her social circle and her family. A young 18-year-old woman could find it very intimidating to file a complaint and send her parents, her brothers and sisters and members of her community to prison. If she were given the choice of a civil process, we could then give her the power to choose, to report the situation and put an end to it, without being afraid of losing all contact with the people around her. Even if this woman is a victim of her social circle, she may not be ready to cut all ties with her family and alienate her broader community.

If the goal is to end abuse and violence, criminalizing all those involved in the marriage may not be the only way to do it. Giving the victim the option and the power to choose a civil process may be another way of stopping this abuse.

Another case we need to keep in mind as we study Bill S-7 is what happened in Denmark. That country passed a law similar to Bill S-7 about five or six years ago. Since then, no criminal charges have been laid in relation to actions such as forced marriage. What does that tell us? It suggests that perhaps the concerns of researchers and experts on the ground are justified and that if we go ahead with measures like the criminalization in Bill S-7, the problem of forced marriage will go even further underground. In Denmark, they wanted to help victims by passing measures to criminalize anyone who attends forced marriages. What was the outcome? Radio silence. Victims did not want to report the crime and go through the legal process.

I think that if we want to introduce something here, we should look at what other countries have done and the results they have seen. Doing so amplifies our concerns and reservations about Bill S-7 as written.

I would now like to quote a few experts on the ground. I already quoted a researcher who did her Ph.D. on this subject, but there are other exceptional people who work with victims every day and who have raised the red flag once again. Also regarding the provisions on forced marriage in Bill S-7, Deepa Mattoo, staff lawyer and acting executive director at the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, had this to say:

We stand for victims and survivors of gender-based violence, whose voices have told us, time and time again, that they would not come forward if it meant criminal sanctions or deportation of their families.

Victims right here in Canada have told us that if it meant that family members would be sent to prison and deported, they would not report anything to the police.

It seems to me that if we will not listen to the experts, we should at least listen to the victims we are trying to help. Coming up with a solution and saying that that is the only solution, without listening to women and victims, shows a macho and sexist attitude. It is like saying that we here in Parliament know what violence against women is all about and we are going to tell them how to solve the problem, but we refuse to listen to the women who have experienced the violence. That is a ridiculous attitude to take.

*Government Orders*

•(1105)

Another expert, Naila Butt, executive director of the Social Services Network, said:

Criminalization of forced marriage, without the much needed institutional support for victims, would only further alienate and harm those facing forced marriage and gender-based violence....

In short, not only is criminalization dangerous, but when there is a lack of services and support, it can be disastrous. The victims must know their rights, know where to go for help and be supported all the way through when they decide to file charges or simply embark on a journey of personal healing. At present, that is not the case. If we really want to do something for these women, we can provide more resources to ensure that they get the help they need.

Another element of this bill concerns polygamy. This bill would allow for the deportation and the inadmissibility to Canada of persons who have practised or are practising polygamy or who are suspected of possibly practising polygamy in the future. That is very broad, and it does give rise to several problems.

Ms. Desloges, a lawyer, appeared before the committee and said that the definition of polygamy is not clear or specific enough to move forward with such a measure. In short, what is polygamy? What definition of polygamy is used to deport someone or prohibit them from entering Canada? Not even that is clear. Before moving forward with such a measure, we should at least know who is guilty of what.

Even if the definition were clearer, that does not mean this measure would be adapted. The concern is that people applying to immigrate will be discriminated against. Immigration applicants could be denied entry to Canada if immigration officers suspect that they will practise polygamy in the future. There is a risk of adding a layer of discrimination to how our immigrants and tourists are selected.

What is more, are only men polygamists or do women practise polygamy as well? If our goal is to protect women who are victims of polygamy, but we include a measure in the bill that might get women who are victims of polygamy deported, then what is the point? If we really want to protect women, then we need to take another look at this measure and ensure that women who say they are victims of polygamy are not deported with their polygamous husband.

On that, I would like to quote Professor Rupaleem Bhuyan from the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto:

I am most concerned with how this bill increases discretionary powers among immigration officers.

A little further on she also says:

The low burden of proof may lead to racist discrimination against immigrants from particular regions of the world.... This provision would also put women who are spouses of polygamous men at risk of being deported or being separated from their children.

These are just some of the concerns about the polygamy measure. Since I do not have much time, anyone who is interested can go see the evidence from the committee's studies.

If Bill S-7 is not the way to go, what is? As I said in my introduction, the NDP supports the intention of the bill. We need to

do something for these female victims. A single crime is one too many. We need to implement good measures that will really help women, not hurt them.

The NDP has given the government several proposals, but the government has not responded yet. Maybe that will change. For example, the NDP wants to get rid of conditional permanent resident status, which causes too many women to fear deportation if they report their spouse's violence. They get help and disappear. They change their names and live in Canada with no official status because they are afraid to report the violence and risk deportation. Conditional permanent residence is part of the problem.

•(1110)

Another thing we need to do is to ensure that women are aware of their rights and the resources at their disposal. We can do more to ensure that before women even come to Canada they are aware of their rights and know what services are available. Furthermore, newcomer women are not the only ones who need this information. Often, women who have been in Canada for several generations are not aware of all of their rights. If we truly want to do something for these women, we can take action and we can do better.

•(1115)

[*English*]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the member opposite's speech.

Certainly, I appreciate that the NDP supports the intent of the bill. The bill is targeted to assist and protect women from activities that would cause them harm, a lot of which come from a barbaric cultural practice within their own family.

The member said that we do not want to turn family members against other family members, and we agree. The intent of the bill is not to create problems within families. What it is intended to do is to protect young women from these barbaric cultural practices where they are forced into a marriage and subjected to abuse which obviously is not consensual.

I wonder if the member can comment on the peace bond aspect of the legislation. It is a warning to the family and can assist when a member of that family says, "I am in danger of being forced into a marriage that I do not want to participate in, and I am worried about my well-being and future." The peace bond can assist that family member.

I wonder if the member could give us her position and the position of her party on the peace bond aspect of this piece of legislation.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

*Government Orders*

The NDP has no problem with the peace bond aspect or the order to keep the peace, if I am not mistaken. As I said earlier, the NDP would be prepared to support a number of aspects of this bill. That is why the NDP asked to remove four clauses at report stage. If that had been done we would have supported the bill. The peace bond aspect was not one of the four clauses we wanted to remove from the bill.

However, the member who just asked me a question was at every meeting. He heard one expert after another share their concerns about the bill. It is sad that he did not listen to them. He had the power in committee to make amendments to address the concerns raised by the experts, but he did nothing. Not only did he reject the NDP's amendments, but he also did not propose any amendments himself. It is as though he refused to listen to the experts who appeared before the committee. I think that is shameful.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her excellent work on this bill. Clearly, it is a very divisive bill and one that is hard to understand. It contains several harmful measures, and while it also contains some useful and interesting things, some problems must be corrected. In Canada, violence against women, especially racialized women, is a serious problem.

The hon. member did not have enough time to speak because there are many inadequate elements in this bill. She did a great job of explaining the bill's shortcomings and our reasons for opposing it.

I would like to give her an opportunity to describe where the NDP wants to make changes that would give more power and more services to women in these situations.

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Speaker, before I respond to the question from the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, I want to say what an exceptional member of Parliament she is. She has been working for years to improve the status of women. She is the chair of the NDP women's caucus and a dedicated advocate for change. We must take our hats off to her. She also worked hard to create a national plan for a strategy to address violence against women. She has worked with me on Bill S-7 to propose constructive amendments to the government.

We must consider the intent of Bill S-7. If the intent of this bill is to protect women, we must ensure that these women have access to better services and that they are aware of their rights. Also, they must be empowered to act. This kind of bill does not give them a choice. We are taking away their power. We must ensure that they take power into their own hands. In order to have this power, they must know their rights. In addition, there must be people who support women in choosing their own paths. These are extremely important elements.

I would like to remind the House that, according to Dr. Lamboley, the criminalization set in motion by Bill S-7 is dangerous if not accompanied by better support and information services regarding victims' rights. We must remember that. Bill S-7 has good intentions, but they are superficial if they are not accompanied by real measures to really help women.

● (1120)

[English]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is very rich to hear the member opposite comment about the activities of the committee. She was at most, if not all, of the meetings. When it comes to hearing the NDP speak about protecting women and protecting Canadian citizens in general, I will refer to the record of the member opposite and her party. They voted against the Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act. They voted against the Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act. They voted against the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act. Now they are going to vote against the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. We always hear this partisan rhetoric and attacks.

We heard from a number of witnesses at committee who clearly support this legislation, particularly victims. We on this side of the House listen to the actual victims.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Take off the clown nose.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, members opposite cannot keep quiet when somebody else is speaking because that is the NDP way. When we throw the truth at them, they cannot answer and instead start yelling and hollering left, right and centre.

The fact of the matter is that victims spoke loudly and clearly. One lady had to have her jaw reconstructed. After many years of abuse in a marriage, she had the courage to stand up and speak out. Those are the people the Conservative government listens to. Unfortunately, the NDP have deaf ears when it comes to listening to the actual victims.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member got a little carried away, but he did say two things I would like to comment on. First, he said that we voted against such and such a bill. It was that colleague himself who refused to vote in favour of a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women. He voted against a strategy to put an end to violence against women. I will not be lectured by him.

In terms of listening to victims, he is correct. I was in those committee meetings and I heard the victims. He will recall that these courageous victims told the committee that they supported the intent of the bill. I asked one of those victims if she supported Bill S-7, and she said yes. When I asked her what specific parts of Bill S-7 would help women, she said that she could not answer my question because she did not know the details of the bill but that she supported the bill's intent to help victims and that more should be done.

In short, I heard victims tell us that more must be done but they were not familiar with the details of the bill. I also listened to the experts, which my hon. colleague did not.



*Government Orders*

[English]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practices of the House, during the debate tonight on the Motion to concur in the 21st Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented on Friday, October 3, 2014, the Chair shall not receive any quorum calls, dilatory motions, or requests for unanimous consent; at the end of the time remaining for the debate, or when no member rises to speak, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division be deemed requested.

• (1125)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy 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)

\* \* \*

**ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BARBARIC CULTURAL PRACTICES ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that 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, be read the third time and passed.

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this bill. The Liberal Party will be voting in favour of it. We have some problems with it, which I will describe, but on balance, we believe that the positive features of the bill are more important than the negative ones and that is why we will support it.

Our biggest problem is with the short title, “zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act”. We moved an amendment to remove the word “cultural” and the government refused. The contents of the bill are not affected by the title, so this is not sufficient for us to vote against the contents, but we are strongly of the view that the word “cultural” is inappropriate.

Part of the reason is that if we look at the commission of such acts of polygamy, forced marriage, things that we all oppose, these are not limited to a single culture. There is the Christian group out in British Columbia in the news, the Jewish group in Quebec, and Muslim groups as well. It is all over the map. It is also of different cultures. When one inserts the word “cultural” into the bill, it creates unnecessary offence felt by certain communities.

The essence of our argument is that the use of the word “cultural” does not do anything at all to affect the content of the bill. It is not really doing anything good, but it is certainly doing something bad as it is causing unnecessary offence to communities that, rightly or wrongly, feel that the government is singling them out. For that

reason, there is something to be gained and nothing to be lost by removing that word.

I have heard the minister on more than one occasion give some convoluted defence of the idea of why “cultural” should be in there. I have never understood his argument and I still do not. My argument is a very simple one. If the word does not do any good, but it does harm in offending communities, then it should be removed.

It is particularly the Muslim community that has taken offence to this. People in the Muslim community feel that they are being targeted. I think it is fair to say as a serious understatement that the government has not exactly reached out to the Muslim community in a positive way, so it is perhaps not surprising that they feel offended.

I remember that within days of 9/11, then prime minister Jean Chrétien went to a mosque to underline his support and the government's support for the Muslim community. Again, to put it very mildly, the leaders of the Conservative government have done nothing remotely resembling that, and instead, they include this word which is offensive to a major Canadian community. The fact that they are unwilling to remove that word simply adds to a long list of things that they have already done which have proved offensive to that particular community.

For all of those reasons, we are strongly opposed to the inclusion of the word “cultural”, but we do think the contents of the bill are such as to deserve support notwithstanding its bad short title. I will mention briefly what the positive features are.

First, the law now prescribes a minimum age for marriage. We think it is positive and good to have a minimum age for marriage across the country. That is a significant contribution of this bill, which goes beyond the distastefulness of the title. That is the first reason we support the bill.

The second thing that we like about this bill is that it would criminalize participation in forced marriages. I think everyone in the chamber is opposed to forced marriages, so it is good that we would make it a criminal offence to participate in such a marriage. That is another thing that the bill would do which we in the Liberal Party support.

It has been argued by the NDP and others that there should be an exemption for young people in this provision of criminalizing participation in forced marriages. My answer to that is that our justice system is flexible. Prosecutors have a lot of flexibility in whether they prosecute somebody or they do not.

• (1130)

There are some cases where, for example, if a 17-year-old brother has participated actively in the forced marriage of his younger sister, it might be appropriate for that person to be charged. Whereas in many cases, the individual young people will be innocent bystanders, not knowing what is going on or for whatever reason do not deserve to be prosecuted.

Our system is flexible enough. The prosecutors have been around for a while. They would not want to go after people in a way that was inappropriate. Preserving some flexibility in the administration of justice may be a positive thing to do.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

We will therefore vote in favour of this bill because we agree with some of its measures, such as establishing a minimum age of marriage and criminalizing participation in a forced marriage. For those reasons, despite the bill's title, which we do not like, we will support this bill.

[English]

There are a couple of other areas where we are less than totally satisfied with the bill. One of those is the provisions regarding inadmissibility for those practising polygamy. It might be helpful if we had a definition of what polygamy is, because I know there are different definitions. When one gives immigration officers substantial power to bar someone from entering Canada, or even conceivably to expel somebody from Canada, it is a good idea to have a precise definition of the action for which that person will be barred or expelled.

I understand this is an issue of some debate in the legal community. I do not think there is a general consensus on what the definition ought to be. Therefore, it is a problem.

I would think that if we are to give immigration officers significant powers to remove people or bar people from entering our country, it would be a good idea to define more clearly what the offence is for which they can take these actions.

Finally, there was some confusion on the definition of the defence of provocation. I seem to recall the minister did not really know what it was in committee and had to be corrected by his officials. There is room for improvement in that area.

I do have objections to the bill and positive points about the bill, but primarily for the two reasons I gave, the definition of age of marriage and the criminalization of participation in forced marriages, the Liberal Party will vote in favour of the bill.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his and his party's support for the legislation.

Once again, the member made reference to the exception that he and his party were taking to the use of the word "cultural". The fact is that in some families, and I need to point that it is not specific to one culture because it is many cultures that this can happen in, it is a tradition to force marriage on their children.

I know of one family in one particular community, and this was 25 years ago, that took its teenage daughters out of high school because it had found husbands for the daughters. They were two years apart. This took place over a two-year period. The girls were left with no high school education and were not happy with the fact that their parents were doing this. It was one of those stigma situations. They did not want to go against their parents or their family.

These kinds of practices that are rooted in culture in some families are not conducive with Canadian values. Could the member perhaps rethink the way he is interpreting the word "cultural" in the title of the bill?

● (1135)

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his reasonably positive comments at the start, but he has not really addressed my point at all. He has just acknowledged that there are all sorts of different, what he calls cultures, or we could call them communities, groups or whatever word we want to use, in Canada that do these practices.

To give one example is fine, but we all agree that this is a bad practice, so that is not at all the point. However, he has not given any reason for using the word "cultural". He just said, "All people, all cultures, all communities do it". Therefore, why put the word "cultural" in the bill when it offends a particular community and does nothing to achieve the objectives of the bill. He has not addressed my question at all, so we remain opposed to the title.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his remarks.

I believe my colleague who spoke before him expressed the scope of the issue and all the finesse required to address these issues. Concern about the protection of these women's rights is shared by both sides of this House.

My colleague pointed out that the member opposite tried to evade a question. I would like to say that it appears as though the government has decided to make this bill law without listening to anyone. No amendments were considered and no comments by witnesses were heard or, I should say, listened to because there were no changes or amendments.

If the section on polygamy is such a concern for people, how does he explain the fact that his party did not present any amendments on this matter, which is nearly as startling as the title?

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

We did propose amendments and it is true that the government did not accept any amendments. The situation is even worse than he suggested. The government not only failed to accept any amendments and listen to witnesses, but it also excluded from its report any evidence presented by the witnesses that it did not like.

As the leader of the Liberal Party said earlier today, Ottawa is broken, and the problem the member has raised about the committee system that does not work is a good example.

I agree with him on that. However, all the bills the Conservatives have introduced pose the same problem, and all we can do is vote for or against them, each time. If we vote against a bill simply because the committee system does not work, that would mean automatically voting against every bill.

Thus we must consider the details of the bill. In this case, as I explained, we will be voting in favour.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the nonsense in the question from the member of the NDP, this is what we did at committee. The member would do well to listen and perhaps take note so he does not make similar mistakes again in the future.

We listened to victims. Victim after victim who came before the committee told us of the damaging and lasting effects on their lives of having been forced into a marriage, into a life of abuse, victims who had the courage to stand up and make a difference in their lives, some after decades of having been subjected to nothing but abuse. They had the courage to get out of that and to come and speak in favour of the legislation and of the key components of it, including the title of the legislation. Those are the people to whom we listened.

As we know, in committees the opposition likes to parade in its set of witnesses, and we heard nothing new. Certainly we did not hear anything from the members of the NDP on the committee and we heard nothing of the impact on victims themselves.

The member of the Liberal Party spoke about something his leader announced today was broken. Certainly the Liberal Party knows a lot about being broken. Without being too sarcastic about their situation, the Liberals have to try to change the channel somehow because Canadians have seen right through that party and their rhetoric.

However, I would like to hear from the hon. member what impact the victims who spoke at the committee had on him personally.

• (1140)

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, like the member opposite, I am not necessarily a huge fan of the NDP, but I still object to his patronizing tone in referring to the question from the NDP. I thought it was a perfectly reasonable question.

What is broken is not the NDP's question but the committee system under the government, of which the Conservatives should be ashamed.

I was in Parliament when we had committees under Liberal governments, and a lot of the members on committees who objected most to government policies were members of the government party. Now we have a system of trained seals where the parliamentary secretary tells everybody what to do, and his little assistant tells him what to do. There is no independent voice on the committee to the point where the Conservatives wipe out testimony they do not like, and none of the members have any independent voice whatsoever.

This is one of the things my leader is addressing. We will, for example, make parliamentary secretaries ineligible to sit on committees. Therefore, that gentleman not only would not be there to boss everybody around, and himself be bossed around by a guy or girl from the PMO, but he would not even be there.

The way committees are supposed to work is that they are to be committees of Parliament, and not run by the executive branch of government.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, thank you once again for permitting me to take part in this important

debate on Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act.

The most recent Speech from the Throne referenced the millions of women and girls worldwide who continue to suffer from abuse and violence, including forced and early marriage, polygamy, and so-called honour-based violence. Since the throne speech, we have repeatedly affirmed the government's commitment to ensuring that barbaric cultural practices do not take place on Canadian soil.

Bill S-7 would amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act, and the Criminal Code to provide more protection and support for vulnerable individuals, primarily women and children. Its measures would render permanent and temporary residents inadmissible if they practise polygamy in Canada. It would strengthen Canadian marriage laws by establishing a new national minimum age for marriage of 16 and by codifying the existing legal requirements for free and enlightened consent for marriage and for ending an existing marriage prior to entering another one. It would criminalize certain conduct related to underage and forced marriage ceremonies, including the act of removing a child from Canada for the purpose of such marriages. It would help protect potential victims of underage or forced marriages by creating a new specific court-ordered peace bond where there are grounds to fear that someone would commit an offence in this area. It would ensure that the defence of provocation would not apply to so-called honour killings and many spousal homicides.

Together, these measures would help immigrant women and girls exercise their own free will and seek the opportunities and success in Canada they deserve.

It is essential to our democracy and our society that all women and girls be allowed to participate to the fullest extent. To help them do so, our government wants to ensure that immigrant women and girls are protected and are no longer subjected to abuse and violence. The bill sets out a multi-pronged approach to do just that.

Women who seek a better life for themselves and their families in Canada should never be subject to constant fear and the threat of violence or death. They need to feel safe, welcome, and protected.

The fact is that barbaric cultural practices are occurring on Canadian soil, with the potential for severe and sometimes fatal consequences for the victims of these very violent acts.

In the words of Salma Siddiqui, the president of the Coalition of Progressive Canadian Muslim Organizations, during a recent appearance before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration:

Who in their right mind can support coercion and honour killings? Bill S-7 does contain a number of sensible elements that all Canadians should embrace. The explicit outlawing of forced marriages and bringing precision to the general provincial practice that 16 is a minimum age for marriage is very reasonable. The provisions that will make it illegal to transport a child under 16 abroad for the purpose of marriage will certainly go a long way in preventing the trafficking of helpless young women.

In a November op-ed, in the *National Post*, this is what Aruna Papp stated:

### *Government Orders*

Over the last 30 years, I have founded agencies in Toronto that assist immigrant women; I have met hundreds of women who are victims of forced marriages and domestic violence. The government's "Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act" recognizes the plight of these women. In presenting this bill, the government of Canada has said, in effect, "As a Canadian citizen, you, too, deserve to live a life free of violence and coercion". For this I am grateful.

That is exactly what the bill would do. It would acknowledge and address the plight of women facing abuse and violence in the very communities in which we live. It would create an environment in which they can feel safe to seek help and protection and where they can thrive, making their own choices for their futures. As Ms. Papp expressed so well, all Canadians deserve to live a life free of violence and coercion.

● (1145)

As well, we know that immigrant and newcomer women and girls face additional barriers in protecting themselves and in seeking assistance compared to women born in Canada. The Government of Canada is committed to helping break down these additional barriers. For example, these newcomers may not be familiar with our laws, or they may not know that certain harmful practices are illegal, inappropriate, or indeed a form of violence. These practices also have a negative and lasting impact on the families and on society in general. We all suffer as long as we allow these practices to continue unchecked.

Our government is working on a number of ways, with concrete steps, to support these women in every way we can. Both the Canada citizenship study guide "Discover Canada" and the "Welcome to Canada" orientation guide were recently updated to reflect the fact that Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to harmful practices such as forced marriage or other forms of gender-based family violence.

Since its introduction, the guide has proven to be popular not only with newcomers to Canada but indeed with many Canadians interested in learning about the rights and responsibilities that come with being a citizen of our great country. One of the points made explicit to all readers of "Discover Canada" is that men and women are equal under Canadian law. The guide states:

Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, "honour killings," female genital mutilation, forced marriage or other gender-based violence

Who can argue with that? Certainly no reasonably minded Canadian living in this wonderful multicultural mosaic of tolerance, acceptance, love, and respect for one another would argue with that comment. While the equality of men and women under the law is a fundamental Canadian value, barbaric cultural practices still exist as a reality for many Canadian women and girls.

Another measure we have taken is Status of Women Canada's investment of \$2.8 million for community-based projects that address harmful cultural practices, such as so-called honour-based violence and forced marriage. Further, since 2009, Justice Canada has held six sector-specific workshops on forced marriage and so-called honour-based violence with police, crown prosecutors, victims services, child protection officials, and shelter workers to assist in their front-line capacity building. As well, Justice Canada and Status of Women Canada co-chair an interdepartmental working group on early and

forced marriage, so-called honour-based violence, and female genital mutilation.

Our government also created regulations that make it much harder for people convicted of crimes that result in bodily harm against members of their family, or other particularly violent offences, to sponsor any family class member to come to Canada. Family violence is not tolerated in Canada under any circumstances, and individuals who do not respect Canadian law and commit serious crimes, regardless of the victim, should not benefit from the privilege of sponsorship. The regulatory changes now in force fixed a pre-existing gap and helped in the protection of sponsored individuals from family violence.

Our government has also brought in new measures in recent years to deter foreign nationals from entering into marriages of convenience to gain permanent resident status in Canada. This includes two-year conditional permanent resident status for certain sponsored spouses. However, because of concerns that conditional status could increase the vulnerability of sponsored spouses who are in abusive relationships, who may be reluctant to seek help out of fear that it will negatively impact their status in Canada, the government put in an exception to this measure in instances where there is evidence of any abuse of a physical, sexual, psychological, or financial nature. This exception would include those who are victims of forced marriage. The exception also applies to situations where there is neglect, such as a failure to provide the necessities of life. This protects Canadians from marriages of convenience while ensuring that women are never put in unsafe situations because of regulations laid out in their own immigration system.

● (1150)

We have also put in place training and better resources to help front-line officers in processing requests for exceptions based on abuse or neglect and in handling sensitive information related to abusive situations.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada's settlement program provides funding to a variety of organizations offering programs and services that respond to the specific needs of permanent residents, including immigrant women and their families, who may find themselves in vulnerable situations. These settlement services are flexible and are designed to meet the diverse needs of newcomers, including women, by providing them with a range of practical supports, such as language training and child care, to help them integrate successfully in Canada.

While overseas, newcomers can access programs that help them understand their rights and responsibilities in Canada and that provide detailed labour market information so they can make informed decisions prior to their arrival.

Once in Canada, women also have access to a range of employment-related supports to help them build their skills to enter the workforce and/or to advance their careers. These are resources and supports that are critical in helping them reach their full potential in Canada.

*Government Orders*

While the government has done much so far, we know that even now needs to be done to protect these women in our immigration system. That is why it is critical that the measures in Bill S-7 are enacted expeditiously.

Over the past year, government officials, including the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and I, met with victims and advocates across the country to get insight into how to stop violence and abuse from occurring in our communities.

Before Bill S-7 was introduced, the minister spent a considerable amount of time meeting with representatives of organizations that provide services to immigrant women and with victims of abuse at a number of round table discussions across our great nation. These important discussions focused on domestic violence, polygamy, forced marriage, the immigration process, and how we can strengthen the protection of vulnerable women and girls. Through these discussions, the government learned many ways it can help address the problems stemming from barbaric cultural practices.

These discussions led to the introduction of Bill S-7, which we are debating today. If passed, its measures would strengthen our laws to protect Canadians and newcomers to Canada from barbaric cultural practices. The bill sends a clear message to anyone coming to Canada that such practices are unacceptable. Canada will promote the equality of men and women and will afford them equal protection and opportunity.

In the words of Tahir Gora, director general of the Canadian Thinkers' Forum:

Critics criticized the name of the bill, calling it a pretty loaded one.

However, our group believes in calling a spade a spade. Violence against women is an absolutely barbaric act. It must be addressed strongly. Forced marriages, polygamy, and honour killings happen every day around the globe under the guise of cultural practices. Should those cultural practices not be condemned? Calling a spade a spade should not be a political issue in a country like Canada where human rights guarantee equal rights to men and women.

Bill S-7 says, in no uncertain terms, to those in this country and those who wish to come here that we will not tolerate cultural traditions in Canada that deprive individuals of their human rights. Through the bill, we are standing up for immigrant women and girls who have come to Canada for a better life and are reinforcing Canada's values of human rights, democracy, justice, and the rule of law.

In Canada, all individuals, all women and girls, should be able to live a life free from intimidation, abuse, and violence. There is absolutely no circumstance that justifies abuse and violence against women and children.

The bill makes clear to anyone who may doubt how seriously Canada takes this issue that Canadians do not, under any circumstance, accept or allow the propagation, support, or enactment of barbaric cultural practices on Canadian soil.

As legislators, we must stand up for all victims of violence and abuse and take necessary action to prevent these practices from happening on Canadian soil. By ensuring the passage into law of the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act, we will be fulfilling this obligation. I strongly encourage all my hon. colleagues on all sides of the House to join me in enthusiastically supporting Bill S-7.

● (1155)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member gets up on a white horse and tells us we are opposed to women's rights and opposed to this or opposed to that. The government's argument is a bit simplistic.

The fact that we have often heard the minister talk about honour crimes and murders and all the rest is a fine example of this. What does the member think about the fact that this is already illegal? In addition, the courts have very recently held that the fact that an offence is an honour crime is not a valid defence under the Criminal Code, and that it is a cultural practice. The government wants to scare us with these headline cases, for example. Does it not realize that in some of these cases, the people involved have been convicted and are in prison? Is it not being simplistic, given that most of these things are already illegal?

Also, in the case of acts that are not already illegal, such as polygamy, does he not agree with my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard that we sometimes have to consider the issues more thoroughly to avoid penalizing these women even more?

● (1200)

[*English*]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the member have a very good second read of the legislation, because what it seeks to do is hold to account those who would knowingly participate in activities that are abusive of women and girls in Canada under the guise of acceptance because of a family tradition or cultural practice. These are barbaric cultural practices.

I will give a clear example. We could very conceivably have a case of a Canadian-born young girl who is taken back to the home country of her parents for a summer vacation, only to find out when she arrives there that a wedding has been pre-arranged for her and that in some cases she is actually not to return to Canada but must live there.

These practices happen. This particular legislation would hold to account those people who knowingly participate in such activities.

Of course there is legislation in place today for any kind of killing, including honour killings, but it is very important that with this legislation we give a very strong message to the victims that they are empowered to speak out and speak up and seek help and support when they find themselves in these very difficult situations, which so many times are imposed on them by family members or through family traditions.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his very informed speech.

This spring I had the privilege of travelling to Malawi and Zambia and observing some of the projects our government is funding there in relation to maternal and newborn child health initiatives as well as the issue of early and forced marriage.

*Government Orders*

We were able to visit with a young lady who had received help to escape from an early forced marriage. We were able to hear her story and hear some of the devastatingly negative impacts that the marriage had on her. We saw funds being used by the YWCA in Zambia to address an issue that the Zambian government wants to address, and it is actually welcoming the help that we can give in that regard.

Early and forced marriage is an issue that we might not be that familiar with here in Canada, because it is often hidden. I wonder if my colleague could highlight some examples and explain the importance of addressing that issue with this legislation.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for that question. I also want to thank him for all of the hard work that he has done over the years. He is certainly recognized as a leader in his community and in our party on this side of the House, if not throughout the entire House, for his dedication and support on issues that bring families comfort not only here in Canada but around the world.

Hearing the story that he heard when he was overseas is yet another example of the importance of legislation such as this. One of the things that I have been saying this morning is how important this legislation is for victims. When we sit on committee, our studies generally do not evoke the kind of emotion that a study like this one does. We can appreciate very well the importance of this legislation to those who have been victims of honour-based violence in their own families.

I referred earlier to a lady who had to have her jaw reconstructed. After many years in a very abusive marriage, she was empowered to speak out, and there she was, sitting in front of a parliamentary committee in the Parliament of Canada, relating in a very passionate way her support for the bill and the importance of it, because it would give a voice to the victims.

As a government, we have a responsibility to protect Canadians and all of those who come to our beautiful country.

● (1205)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from the other side of the House for his speech. I think it is important to note that the bill the House is considering today comes to us from the Senate. It has a number of flaws and problems that we have pointed out.

I want to note that my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard is our immigration critic. She has worked very hard on this bill. The numerous experts who appeared at committee identified the very serious flaws in this bill. Unfortunately, once again, as is so often the case with the Conservatives, they are playing politics with an issue as important as the one before us today.

My question to my colleague is this. Why did they not listen to the numerous experts who appeared at committee and said there were flaws in this bill? On this side of the House, we do agree with the principle of the bill, but it has fundamental flaws. Why did they not listen to the experts who appeared at committee? Why did they not amend this bill to make it a piece of legislation that would be acceptable to everyone?

[*English*]

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question because it allows me an opportunity to point out the experts that we did listen to. We have a definition of “experts” on this side of the House that is different from the NDP’s definition. For us, the experts are the people who have lived this problem. They are the victims themselves.

Here is what I would say to the member. Perhaps she could take some notes.

Aruna Papp was a victim. This is what she said on May 7:

I commend the government for its leadership in taking a stand on a very difficult issue and for defending the human rights of vulnerable women who are unable to speak for themselves. I’m thrilled to support this bill. In many ways, it is a result of my work with new immigrants and a response to the voices unheard in the past.

There is an expert.

Here is another expert. Raheel Raza, from *Muslims Facing Tomorrow*, said:

I am very glad that our government is taking such a keen interest in this. There are thousands of young women and children out there who would otherwise not be protected.

Richard Kurland is another expert. He is a lawyer working with immigrants every single day in Vancouver. He has appeared many times before our committee on a variety of issues. This is what Mr. Kurland had to say:

It’s the right thing at the right time. It addresses directly a practical problem, so I come back to a more global view. Why aren’t other countries adopting this? Canada’s the model. I think you’ve nailed it, quite frankly, squarely on the head, or to put it differently, yes, it’s the right legislative effort, which will take away a possible defence from individuals who ought to be incarcerated for a substantial period of time for their act.

These are the experts. I wish that the member opposite and her colleagues would listen to the real experts on this issue.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Chambly—Borduas.

I truly regret that the time for this debate has been limited by the current government. This Parliament has been stifled in its ability to enter into full debate on issues crucial to the well-being of Canadians, people who depend on conscientious, considered legislation from their government. In fact, the government has limited debate 100 times in an effort to push through an agenda that has nothing to do with democracy and everything to do with heavy-handed agendas that quite deliberately ignore the advice of any expert counsel who do not share the government’s ideology.

This bill is part of the Conservative government’s pattern of introducing politicized measures that can actually cause harm. At the very least, we in the NDP caucus are very concerned about the unintended consequences of Bill S-7, and we are certainly not alone in our opposition to those consequences.

I want to be very clear that we do not support forced or underage marriages. However, we are convinced that this bill does not constitute an appropriate response to the significant problem of gender-based violence by treating it as a cultural problem. In fact, Bill S-7 could very well aggravate existing problems.

*Government Orders*

We need to be concerned about violence against all people, but most certainly against all women. That said, I want to emphasize some of the testimony heard in the citizenship and immigration committee.

According to the Canadian Women's Foundation, half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence by age 16, and 67% of Canadians say they personally know at least one woman who has been sexually or physically assaulted.

A woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner every six days on average.

On any given day in Canada, more than 3,300 women, along with 3,000 children, are forced to sleep in an emergency shelter to escape domestic violence.

In a 2009 national survey, Canadian women reported 460,000 incidents of sexual assault in one year alone. Only about 10% of all sexual assaults are reported to police.

When it comes to sexual assault, women are frequently not believed. They are blamed for being assaulted or subjected to callous or insensitive treatment when police fail to take evidence, when friends fail to believe them, or when their cases are arbitrarily dropped.

More than one in ten Canadian women say they have been stalked by someone in a way that made them fear for their lives.

In short, violence affects all women in Canada, whether they were born here or elsewhere. Women victims of domestic violence are citizens, immigrants, and refugees. Some have been sponsored to Canada, while others have sponsored their own spouses. Regardless of status or religion, no woman should be subjected to gender-based violence, including the practices of forced or underage marriage.

As I indicated previously, this bill may also have serious and unintended consequences, including criminalization of the victims of polygamy, criminalization and deportation of children, and separation of families.

Instead of presenting a sensationalized bill that does not get to the root of the problem, the minister should commit to widespread and meaningful consultations with community groups and experts so that the real issue of gender-based violence is addressed in a meaningful and effective manner. The Conservatives conducted a sham of a consultation.

The government must also increase investments to organizations that provide such services as safe and affordable housing, counselling, and assistance in navigating the very complicated and often traumatizing family, criminal, and immigration legal systems. Clearly this approach is of very little interest to the government, which has no interest in actively promoting the kinds of programs and policies that would truly support women and their children.

We do not have a national program for safe, affordable housing. We did at one time, but it was de-funded by the Conservatives in 1993 and ended by the Liberals in 1996. This is a national shame that an NDP government will most certainly correct.

●(1210)

It was also made clear by witnesses at the citizenship and immigration committee that affordable, regulated child care would also help women facing violence. Despite decades of promises, Canada is still without a national child care program. Fortunately, the NDP has, with the support of our leader, created a plan for \$15-a-day child care accessible to all Canadian families. Our plan would be implemented in partnership with the provinces and would fund 370,000 child care spaces. We are only one election away from safe, regulated, and affordable child care. Every child deserves to be cared for and every family, every woman, needs to know that our children are safe.

None of that vision is apparent in Bill S-7. Stakeholders and expert witnesses testified before the Senate committee on human rights that this legislation makes no provisions to allow women who are conditional permanent residents to remain in Canada if their polygamous partner is deported. This legislation would not allow for the reunification of families in instances where a man immigrates with one of his wives and all of his children, leaving other wives behind, effectively separating mothers from their children, from their own offspring.

UNICEF has also expressed concerns that the bill would impose criminal sanctions against minors who attend, celebrate, or help organize a forced marriage, effectively impacting their future with a criminal record. Because the penalties include criminalization, some women and children will not want to come forward to report forced marriages and risk seeing their parents or spouse end up with a criminal record.

There are other measures in the bill that would not achieve anything. They simply duplicate existing laws. Changing the Civil Marriage Act to make free and enlightened consent a legal requirement for a marriage is already part of the civil code of Quebec and common law in other provinces. Canadian criminal law already provides recourse relevant in most cases involving forced marriage prior to and after the marriage, as well as in the case of travelling with a minor with the intent to force that minor into marriage, including uttering threats, assault causing bodily harm, assault with a weapon, aggravated sexual assault, kidnapping, forcible confinement, abduction of a young person, procuring feigned marriage, removal of a child from Canada with intent to commit acts outside Canada that would be offences if committed here, sexual offences against children and youth, failure to provide the necessities of life, and abandoning a child.

As I said, there have been many critics of this legislation. The Canadian Bar Association was unequivocal. The bar's advice was simple and succinct: scrap the bill.

It is clear that we have to stand back from the government's rhetoric to get some perspective on what actually makes sense. If we are truly concerned with the welfare of those who have come to make Canada their home, then we must. There are positive measures that we should enact.

*Government Orders*

The conditional permanent residence or CPR introduced by the Conservatives in 2012 made permanent residency for sponsored spouses conditional on living together and maintaining a conjugal relationship for two years in cases where the couple has been together for less than two years and does not have children. At a number of committee hearings, witness after witness stressed how this increases the vulnerability of women in our immigration system. It was noted that the obligation to cohabit with a sponsor in order to avoid deportation exposes women to all kinds of abuse, such as isolation, manipulation, and threats. There are remedies. The wives of that individual who is deported should be allowed to stay and become part of Canadian society.

In terms of forced marriages and underage marriages, we need to consult with the stakeholders, front-line workers, and experts about what the best programs and measures are for preventing and responding to gender-based violence and how to best implement them and how to commit to implementing our proposed national action plan addressing violence against women. These are important. Above all, let us have full and honest debate so that the best of ideas and policies can become part of Canadian law.

• (1215)

It is time to end the Conservative three-ring circus of division, fearmongering, and scapegoating. It is time to restore sensibility to this House. It is time to stop hiding in camera. Let us throw open the doors and truly listen to Canadians, to the experts, and make good and careful legislation.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague. The issue of protecting immigrant women from forced marriage and family violence is very important, but I would like to ask my hon. colleague what she thinks about the intent of this legislation, whether it is actually focused on achieving that end or is focused on stirring up the Conservative base.

We have seen a very disturbing trend lately, which I think is unprecedented, of attacks on the immigrant community. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has talked about devout Muslim women in Canada being potential terrorists. Conservatives have talked about “brown people” and “whities”. The member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound talked about telling foreigners to go back where they came from.

This kind of race-baiting is very disturbing in a country as multicultural as Canada. I would like to ask my hon. colleague if she thinks that this so-called attack on barbaric practices is another way of race-baiting particular groups in this country.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Timmins—James Bay is exactly right. This is race-baiting.

The government has spent an inordinate amount of time and energy on stirring up the people of Canada to make them think there is an enemy in every corner and that women and children are somehow the enemy.

This bill, quite simply, perpetuates that. It targets and does great harm to immigrant women. It would prevent them from being able to go to authorities if they are, in fact, in danger. It would prevent their

children from being able to speak out if they see violence in their home. It would not protect anyone from harm.

We already have laws that prevent forced marriage and polygamy, all kinds of legislation on the books that addresses those issues.

What we do not have in this country is a serious government that truly wants to look at the issue of violence against women in an entire way. We have seen 1,200 missing and murdered aboriginal women ignored by the government. I would call that barbaric. I would call that very barbaric.

• (1220)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comments on this very important bill, the barbaric cultural practices bill.

My understanding is that the member is actually a member of the committee that heard testimony. I believe most of the testimony it heard had a lot to do with victims, including Aruna Papp and Lee Marsh, who commented on the importance of this bill and, as victims themselves, why it is important to pass this legislation.

What would the member say to those people, who actually have been victims and who are supportive of the bill, about why the New Democratic Party is not supporting it going forward?

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, as a New Democrat, I am very empathetic to victims of violence. That is something we have stood for on this side of the House, over and over, for decades.

There is a big difference between those who understand the law and those who do not understand the law. In fact, the Canadian Bar Association was very clear. It would seem to me that it does indeed understand the law. It said this is a harmful bill and we should strike it, because there is too much wrong with it. We should get rid of it.

The minister's response to that was that the Canadian Bar Association is filled with Liberals and card-carrying New Democrats. He did not take seriously, at all, the fact that this was a body of legal experts who were warning him, advising him, and telling Parliament that this is a dangerous piece of legislation.

The government should be very careful when it is impacting the lives of women and children and those who are depending on this Parliament to make good and wise decisions. I am still waiting to see those good and wise decisions.



*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today to Bill S-7. Indeed, there are a number of problems with this bill. We can start with the easiest and most obvious point: the title. We rarely want to spend time talking about the title of a bill, but it must be said that a number of witnesses, stakeholders and elected members talked about this at committee. Criticism was voiced about the fact that the title refers to barbaric cultural practices. The reason for raising this point is that since it was elected, this government has used short titles, which simplify what are sometimes overly long titles, as political tools to pander to a particular base, and sometimes even to sow division. An example is the omnibus crime bill entitled safe streets and communities act. By using titles like these, the government is able to pursue its demagoguery, the aim being to portray the opposition as opposed to putting a halt to these practices, or opposed to safe and protected communities. I think this is a problem in the bill, but it is also a way of dividing people and playing them off against one another. This bill talks about barbaric cultural practices; it associates cultural practices with barbaric acts. That is problematic.

With this in mind, it is important to point out, as several of my colleagues have done, including the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, our critic in this area who made an excellent speech earlier today, that no one in the House, including the NDP, is in favour of violence against women. On the contrary, we denounce these horrifying acts. We ourselves are making proposals to put an end to these acts. For example, we have proposed that there be an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women. My colleague from Churchill moved a motion to adopt a strategy to end violence against women, one of many other measures we have proposed. All of this demonstrates that everyone in the House agrees that these horrible acts should be stopped. The problem is the approach taken, the tool used to achieve that objective. The title of the bill is a very bad start, because it is divisive. The consultation process was also problematic.

These are obviously very complex issues. Why? I have listened to several members talk about stories they have heard from people in other countries. The various things we hear about polygamy and forced marriages sometimes sound strange to people in Quebec and Canada. They are things we are less familiar with. As a result, it is difficult for us, as legislators, to enact good legislation on this subject when we have no experience with it. It is therefore important that we listen to the testimony in committee. With that in mind, and given the complexity and the unfamiliarity to some members in the House, we really need to stress the importance of consultation.

From the outset, even before the bill was introduced, there were flaws in the consultation carried out both before and during the drafting of the bill. Of course we are talking about consultations held behind closed doors, only by invitation of the minister. As a result, some people who would have wanted to participate and voice an opinion may not have been invited. That would have meant that all the different voices and views on this issue could have been heard. When a consultation is by invitation of the minister, it may fall into the trap of partisanship, of wanting to pander to a particular clientele and engaging in vote buying, and even of playing politics.

I believe that is not the only problem with the process. Not only did the committee not adopt any amendments, but the minister

rejected the idea of the committee making any amendments, right from the start, before we even had a chance to debate this bill. That is a serious problem, because we all agree that we must find ways to end violence against women, especially since we want all cultural communities and people we have accepted into Canada to feel safe and welcome here and know that we will protect their rights.

● (1225)

From that perspective, it is a serious problem to see such closed-mindedness on the part of the minister and the Conservative government, because we simply want to try to find constructive solutions.

We should agree to work on all the issues on which we can all agree. There are always certain issues, however, that stand out in the crowd. Those would be, for example, matters of security such as Bill C-51, and the issue of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

One would think that we could reach unanimous agreement on these issues, just once. We want to see certain concerns rise above partisanship, and I think those include the issue of violence against women. The fact that the minister had such a closed mind even before we had a chance to debate this issue is very disturbing. It should also worry the Canadians we are trying to protect.

The government is always saying it wants to protect victims. However, it does not want to listen to them. That is a problem and we wonder how good the protective measures can be when it will not listen to the people it is trying to protect.

While we are talking about closed minds, let us also mention time allocation motions, sometimes known as closure. Right now we are trying to debate a bill but are subject to time allocation.

Last week the government set a regrettable record, when it imposed time allocation for the one-hundredth time, reaching 100 motions of closure. This record shows that the government, unfortunately, seeks neither consensus nor productive and constructive ways to serve the community, Canadians, or our constituents who sent us here to Ottawa. The government is only interested in playing politics and this bill is yet another example.

Another point is that this bill originated in the Senate. Even though the minister is the bill's sponsor here in the House, he did not have the courage to introduce it here himself. He made an announcement a very long way from Ottawa, rather than coming into the House and announcing his intention to introduce such a bill. It was done at an event that resembled an election campaign, in the greater Toronto area.

That is another indication that this bill was introduced with partisan and political motives, rather than with a constructive desire to protect the victims of these horrible acts of violence, primarily women and children, of course.

Therefore, we say that the process has a number of shortcomings, which is sufficient reason to oppose the bill, even though we support its intent, as both the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard and I have said.

*Government Orders*

Let us consider the bill's substance. The government is trying to frighten us by talking about the violence that is committed, including murders and so-called "honour crimes". We should note, however, that the courts have already determined that cultural practices do not constitute an adequate or sufficient defence under the Criminal Code.

In other words, if someone appears in court charged with murder, he will not have an adequate defence if his only defence is that he committed a crime of honour because of cultural practices. Such a person must face the existing laws, which already protect people from such crimes.

We also want to end polygamy and forced marriage. The government is right to urge action on these matters. The problem is that it is making the wrong moves.

The government stubbornly insists that it simply wants to deport all these people. However, forced marriages take place in secrecy. We are taking a risk that they will become an even deeper secret. If people are afraid to expose such marriages, it is because we are not providing them with the tools to do so, especially since in exposing such situations they might cause their whole family to be deported.

As my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard put it so well, polygamy is not just a case of a man imposing his will on several women. The women are victims, and deporting the women is not a solution to polygamy. Clearly, we are going to punish them further and put them in an even more vulnerable situation.

Although we are opposed to violence against women and want to do everything possible to end this scourge, this bill is not the answer. It does not provide the right tools to do so. We therefore must oppose it.

•(1230)

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very detailed speech, which addressed this broad issue from several angles. I appreciate his hope to see Parliament address these very important questions with as little partisanship as possible. He is right to raise a number of points that are of concern to many experts.

I would like to mention the legislation in Denmark that reinforced a culture of secrecy, since no acts were reported. On that point, I would like to say clearly that I am very surprised, because my colleague just said that this bill was introduced with great fanfare almost suitable for an election campaign.

I would therefore like to draw my colleague's attention to this. It is very distressing to see the extent to which this government has used legislative issues for partisan purposes and in such an abhorrent way. It simply went ahead with this bill with no amendments, in spite of the extensive testimony from victims and experts, which was ignored by the government, as if it had all the answers.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

On the issue of partisanship, we need only recall the sad spectacle we witnessed last week during question period. The Conservatives and the Liberals accused each other of having the worst record when

it came to immigration and being the most so-called racist party, and here I am using their words, not my own.

In view of that sad spectacle, we must not forget that we are talking about the lives of people and victims. This is not the time to be engaging in vote buying and trying to divide people. That is why we are speaking out against the title of the bill.

In addition, as my colleague said and as I said in my speech, the fact that a bill like this was announced at a campaign-style event in the greater Toronto area reveals a purely vote-seeking and partisan intent. It shows a lack of any desire to solve the problem and a lack of consideration for the victims of horrible acts.

The same thing is happening in relation to a number of issues. We need only think of Bill C-51. When it comes to security and fundamental freedoms, the government can only hurl insults, divide people and make announcements at campaign-style events. That is not the way to govern or the kind of leadership the public is looking for. Most importantly, it is not the way to deal with horrors like these.

•(1235)

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government claims that this bill will help victims, but there are measures in the bill that will make the situation even more difficult for victims.

For example, it will criminalize everyone who participates in a forced marriage. People who might report such a marriage would therefore have to ask themselves whether they really want the entire family to be treated like criminals.

A number of similar questions arise. That is why it is important to listen to the victims and find ways of helping them without requiring that they swallow something that is not going to solve the problem.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent comments. In fact, we do see that the bill would simply reinforce the secrecy surrounding forced marriages.

As the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard said earlier today, this also relates to conditional permanent residence. We know that people from various cultural communities fight tooth and nail to come and make a life in Canada. We are very proud to have a welcoming country, even if it has perhaps become a little less so in recent years, under this government. However, when these people are at risk of being deported or losing their permanent resident status, among other things, we are not encouraging them to report these problems. We are not really protecting the victims.

We have to protect victims against these acts, but we also have to empower them to safely report the practices that victimize them and ensure that they do not suffer more consequences.

[English]

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Vancouver South.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. It is very important to take a strong stance to ensure that no woman or girl in Canada becomes a victim of any violent practice that violates basic human rights. These practices are not acceptable in Canadian society, and Bill S-7 would send this clear message to all Canadians and also to those people coming into Canada.

We had the benefit of hearing from a number of experts in the field during the citizenship and immigration committee hearings. Some criticized the bill; others were in full support. All, however, agree that combatting violence against women and girls is an important and laudable goal.

I would like to quote one of the witnesses before the committee, Ms. Salma Siddiqui from the Coalition of Progressive Canadian Muslim Organizations. She said, “The Government of Canada’s decision to table a bill for zero tolerance of barbaric cultural practices is the right move and should be welcomed”.

Within Canada, there is no room for a culture of violence against women and girls. I believe that where there are gaps in legislation that have allowed perpetrators to abuse those very people who count on them for protection or that have prevented victims from getting help, it is our responsibility as a government to ensure that these gaps are closed. Among other things, this bill proposes to fill gaps that have been identified with regard to early and forced marriage. There are deplorable practices that principally victimize young women and are often carried out by their own parents or other family members.

I would paraphrase from another witness before committee, Ms. Lee Marsh, a victim herself of forced marriage. She testified that if she had known that what her mother was doing was against the law, she might have felt better equipped to refuse the marriage. Ms. Marsh also told the committee that this bill in isolation is not enough to combat these practices. In my own riding of Kildonan—St. Paul, a young girl who was in a forced marriage had nowhere to turn. She jumped off the Chief Peguis bridge because she was so desperate to get out of that marriage and away from that abuse. This bill would help victims who feel that way to know that they have a way out of an abusive situation.

This bill would provide solid ground to give tools to law enforcement and front-line service providers to bring perpetrators to justice and to protect victims.

In addition to the legislation, people need to be aware of Canadian laws and values. We are not ignoring the importance of raising awareness or training and resources, nor are we overlooking the importance of working together with our provincial and territorial counterparts and community partners in the field. Our government has been working diligently for years with many different stakeholders on these very issues.

Just to give a few examples, Justice Canada and Status of Women Canada have provided funding to a number of non-governmental organizations, NGOs, to conduct awareness raising and training on honour-based violence and forced marriages. Justice Canada contributed funding for the development of a high school curriculum that would teach students about human rights, including about early

### *Government Orders*

and forced marriages. I know of instances where young girls were taken out of school and did not graduate because the parents found someone that they wanted their daughter to marry.

Over the years, Justice Canada has organized workshops with front-line workers across the country, including child protection workers, shelter workers, community-based workers, police officers and crown prosecutors to share expertise, create networks and discuss risk assessments and appropriate services for victims of these horrendous acts.

Justice Canada and Status of Women Canada co-chair an interdepartmental working group on early and forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation. This working group is creating a federal-provincial-territorial working group on these same issues.

Justice Canada has published public legal education and information materials on family violence that include information on early and forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation.

• (1240)

Justice Canada and the RCMP have also created training materials for police officers on these issues as part of their domestic violence training. This training would be upgraded to reflect the changes in Bill S-7.

As I have demonstrated, there are many layers to the Government of Canada’s approach to tackling these issues. The bill is but one aspect of the ongoing and collaborative efforts being taken by the government to address these disturbing issues. It is an integral and necessary part of the government’s multifaceted approach to tackling these types of issues, which include prevention, denunciation, awareness training, consultation and collaboration.

At the Citizenship and Immigration committee, members had the opportunity to hear from victims of forced marriage and other so-called honour-based violence. Ms. Arooj Shahida, a victim herself and now an advocate had this to say:

—I am hopeful this bill is the beginning of a direction towards significant change in not only how we deal with those who believe they can trample the rights of others, but in how we can successfully reach out and provide hope to those who have none.

Canada has always been a leader in protecting basic human rights and freedoms. I applaud our representatives for again taking the lead on these issues. I hope the hon. members will look to making this legislation an effective, practical law that will support the women and youth who live in this reality every day of their lives.

It is clear that our government is taking the right steps to protect young women and girls, and all victims of so-called honour-based violence. I am proud that the government is sending a strong message to Canadian society and to the world that Canada will not tolerate violence against women.

*Government Orders*

Today in the House I heard many different members put their points of view across, which is fine. However, outside of these hallowed walls are real people. When one is on the ground and talking to young girls who have been forced into a marriage, generally marrying someone much older, it affects their whole family. Usually, the motivation behind the forced marriage is financial, or a friend of a friend. I have had many cases where an older man has convinced a father that he wants to marry his friend's daughter. After having said that, if they move or whatever, often the young girl is abused and forced to be a so-called wife without the diligent respect and equality that is so prevalent in many Canadian families. Why should we ever tolerate anything that has something to do with violence against women?

I encourage all members to give Bill S-7 their full support. Our country is a beautiful country with much diversity and it is a basic human right of every woman and girl to live without fear or violence, to be educated, to grow, prosper and be respected. That is called the dignity of life. That is what the true north strong and free stands for.

People will listen to these speeches in Parliament, especially going into an election. They will listen to what their representatives say about violence against women.

I highly recommend Bill S-7. It is a real tipping point in Canada to talk about this and actually take action to stop violence against these women.

•(1245)

[Translation]

**Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. She has raised some valid points. In fact, I think that all members in this House, regardless of party, want to take action to combat violence against women. These are important actions. However, I still am unable to understand why her party refuses to act on the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women. This is a crucial issue. These are women who live in our provinces and need our immediate assistance, but the government is refusing to act. I am hearing a lot of fine words here, but very little is being done about this.

In any event, I would like my colleague to explain further why her government has once again refused to listen to the comments of the experts who tried, at committee, to propose important improvements to the bill. Those proposals were completely ignored once again. This is an attitude I am unable to understand. I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that subject.

[English]

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I heard something totally untrue in a comment that was made prior to the member's question.

One of our ministers has put together an action plan for murdered and missing women. I talked about the action plan in my speech. Members across the way have been silent about it. I had hoped that parliamentarians would talk about how they could implement that national action plan to take action to protect those women who were at risk of being murdered and missing.

I have the red shawl from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. I got it the hard way. I got it by actually working with families whose

loved ones were murdered and missing. It is a travesty when we do not put our emphasis on action right now to help those families and those women.

On the member's question, in committee there were varied points of views. At the end of the day, those views come forth. Not everybody will share the views of the members across the way. Those decisions are being made in Bill S-7 because that is what is needed to help prevent violence against those women.

•(1250)

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated my colleague's speech. I know that women's rights are very important to her. We worked together on Bill C-36 concerning prostitution. There was a provision in that bill that unfortunately criminalized the victims, the women. The government proposed an amendment precisely because criminalizing victims as an objective will never put an end to any criminal activity. In fact, she supported that amendment.

However, what struck me is that Bill S-7 does exactly the same thing. It criminalizes these women, who are themselves victims of an unacceptable practice. I would like to know why the government was not prepared to reverse the trend, in this bill, and remove the provisions that criminalize the victims.

We know it, and my colleague knows it: criminalizing victims does not prevent offences from being committed.

[English]

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very important input into Bill C-36. I quite enjoy the heart she shows for victims. However, I totally reject the premise of her comment that Bill S-7 would criminalize victims. It would protect women.

That young girl, after talking to her sister who she was close to, jumped off a bridge as a result of a forced marriage. Her sister told me that there had to be a bill put in place that would protect her against having to succumb to a forced marriage.

This bill would protect women. Therefore, I strongly disagree with the premise of the question that the hon. member across the way put forward a minute ago. The bill would protect the victims from terrible abuse, intimidation and a lifetime of horrendous brutal experiences.

Bill S-7 would open the door for these women, and it is high time we did this in our country.

**Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in support of Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. I would like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the arguments that have been raised in opposition to Bill S-7.

Members of the opposition have claimed that Bill S-7 is unnecessary because the criminal law already covers early and forced marriages, and is sufficient to respond to these heinous forms of violence. They also claim that these proposed amendments will have unintended consequences on victims because the proposals will criminalize early and forced marriage.

*Government Orders*

We have heard many members in the House condemn these forms of gender-based violence as serious violations of the human rights of women and girl. We have heard about the serious harms inflicted upon women and girls forced to marry against their will. Our government will not sit back when we know that women and girls in Canada are being forced into marriage or being taken abroad, sometimes under false pretenses of attending someone else's wedding, only to find that they are the ones getting married despite their lack of consent.

These are completely unacceptable practices. They are an affront to the values of our country, to the freedom of choice, to the right to be protected from violence and to the principle of gender equality. It is our government that is standing up for the victims of these horrific forms of violence by ensuring that these victims and law enforcement have all of the tools they need to prevent these marriages from happening in the first place.

Yes, there are already criminal offences to address aspects of early and forced marriage, but there are also some significant gaps in the law. This bill is about filling those gaps to ensure that our strong justice system is enabled with responses that are even more robust. In addition, the bill provides a range of responses to these forms of violence that are specifically designed to prevent them from even occurring.

I will now take some time to address some gaps in our current laws.

First, there is currently no criminal offence that addresses child or early marriage where force or threat of force was not used prior to this marriage. Some claim that the current criminal provisions relating to the age of consent for sexual activity is enough to address early marriage. That is simply inaccurate.

The current Criminal Code provision that sets out the minimum age for sexual activity, section 150.1, is 16 years of age, with exceptions for those who are close in age and have explicit exemptions for married persons. In other words, right now a person under the age of 16 who is married to someone considerably older is not covered by this protective provision.

Permit me to also explain why this exemption for marriage currently exists. It exists because there is no national minimum age for marriage below which marriages are automatically illegal. Apart from the federal minimum age of 16 for marriages in Quebec, there is currently no federal legislation setting out the minimum age for marriage in the rest of Canada.

As many of my colleagues have pointed out, this leaves the old federal common law to fill the void, which is unclear, but appears to set the minimum age at 14 for boys and 12 for girls. It is therefore possible that a child under the age of 16 can currently be married in Canada, except in Quebec. It is also possible, on the basis of private international law rules, that a Canadian child under the age of 16 can be taken out of the country and married in a country where such child marriages are legally solemnized, and upon that child's return to Canada, the marriage is currently recognized as legally valid, except in Quebec. This is because there is no federal legislation that renders a child legally incapable of consenting to the marriage. This bill would address that gap.

By introducing a national minimum age of 16, below which no child can legally consent to marriage, the bill would not only prohibit those underage marriages from taking place in Canada, but it would also have the effect of rendering underage marriages of Canadian children abroad invalid because a child lacked the legal capacity to marry.

• (1255)

When Ms. Kathryn Marshall, a lawyer and equity activist, spoke at committee, she clarified:

We can't simply rely on the common law. The common law is something that's very much open to interpretation; that's the nature of it. It should be codified. It's extremely important to do so.

She explained that codifying the national minimum age of marriage is an important step in ensuring that no young woman or girl is forced into marriage.

The current gaps in the law related to early marriage are significant and warrant remedial legislative reform. Right now, the actual underage or forced marriage ceremony itself does not currently constitute a criminal offence and the provision in question does not refer to underage or forced marriage. Under the existing provisions, the authorities would need to be able to prove that a sexual or violent offence was intended to be committed abroad.

As a result, we need to have anchoring offences in the Criminal Code that are founded on the harms associated with underage and forced marriages themselves, as distinct from the harm of physical or sexual violence. That is why the bill would amend the Criminal Code to make it clear that anyone who actively participates in a marriage ceremony with full knowledge that one or both of the participants is under the age of 16 or is marrying against their will may be criminally liable.

These two new offences would act as the touchstone for amendments to the provision related to the removal of a child from Canada so that the authorities would have the tools to stop someone from taking a child out of the country for an underage or enforced marriage.

These two new offences would also act as the basis for the creation of a new peace bond designed to prevent underage and forced marriages from taking place without having to lay a criminal charge.

This speaks to the second gap in the current laws to address forced marriage, what I would refer to as the prevention gap.

This government is aware that many victims of forced marriage are reluctant to see their family members criminally prosecuted. This is something we see in all forms of family violence, be it intimate partner violence, child abuse, or elder abuse. Victims need more tools to prevent these forms of violence from happening in the first place. That is exactly what the bill would do.

These two new anchoring offences of underage and forced marriage were specifically designed so that victims could use the peace bonds to prevent these marriages from happening and so that the authorities could stop someone from removing a child from the country to commit these crimes. These are necessary tools to fill the gaps in the current law.

*Government Orders*

The bill would make it clear to perpetrators that we will not tolerate abuse, such as so-called honour killings, early or forced marriages, or any other type of gender-based violence. We are taking steps to strengthen our laws to help ensure that no young girl or woman in Canada becomes a victim to early or forced marriage.

Instead of voting for this important legislation and actually taking action to protect young women and girls, the opposition continues to play politics. It is time for the games to end and for us all in this House to stand up for women and children.

I urge that all my colleagues join with me in supporting this important bill at third reading.

• (1300)

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have Parliament. We have committees. Bill S-7 comes from the Senate. Why all this work?

The NDP requested a couple of changes, amendments, and the Conservatives said, “No, no, no. It’s our bill and it’s not touchable.”

Why are they not open to some changes and amendments to really have the support of the whole House on the bill?

**Ms. Wai Young:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member why the opposition is not supporting women and children.

We have heard in various debates and speeches today and before that women need this protection in Canada. There are gaps in the law. That is very clear. In fact, I outlined that in my speech today.

Despite the rhetoric from the opposition over the years saying that it cares about women and children in Canada, why is it not standing up to support the bill, to support women and children facing abuse in Canada?

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have not heard the opposition say “no”. The question that I have heard the opposition ask is why the redundancy; why make illegal what is already illegal. I realize that you do not like the vice, but making it illegal twice does not make it any less likely to happen.

When you talk about the safety of women and children in this country, no issue is more drastic, requires more action, and is more profoundly Canadian in its origins than the missing and murdered indigenous women, and yet your party has spent virtually no time on that file. It has spent all of this time making illegal that which is already illegal.

My question for you is that if you are really that concerned about women and children, where is the urgency on the file that has destroyed the lives of 1,200 families in this country? Why has there been silence from your party on that issue?

• (1305)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I will refer the question to the hon. member for Vancouver South.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to thank the member for the question, because it gives me the opportunity to say how truly sad I am that the member and his party did not support Bill S-2. Bill S-2 gave women and children protection on reserve, and the Liberal Party did not support it when it was brought before the House several years ago.

It is very personal to me, because the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women is one that is very dear to us in the Lower Mainland in B.C. We want to move forward. We want to address these issues. That is why we have an action plan for missing and murdered aboriginal women. We do not want to just study it again for another several years, which is what the opposition wants to do. The opposition wants inaction. It wants to just talk about it. We have heard the opposition’s rhetoric today. We want action and we are doing it.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, who we have heard are the organizations and leaders of the aboriginal peoples. Everybody is asking for an inquiry and the Conservative government has refused it. Those people want to have an inquiry.

This question is the same as my first one. Why do the Conservatives believe they have it all when the rest of the country is saying differently? They are saying that they want a study and they want to do it. It is the same thing as with this bill here. We want to make some amendments. They are not amendments to make it worse, but to make it better and to be fair.

You just close their eyes to that. It is like Parliament does not exist to you people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** This is another reminder for the House to direct the questions and comments through the Chair.

We are getting a little off topic. I recognize that there was a previous question that related the question of murdered and missing aboriginal women in the course of the questions. I see the hon. member for Vancouver South rising. Certainly, it is related, but we can get a little bit off track when we get down into another specific issue.

The hon. member for Vancouver South.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Mr. Speaker, I want the member to know that I am an immigrant myself. I have worked with immigrant settlement agencies across Canada. I have worked with immigrant women and children across Canada for over 30 years.

I want the member to know that it is our government that has stood up for women and children and taken action on this. We have doubled funding for women’s programs across Canada. We brought forward Bill S-2. We are bringing forward Bill S-7.

I would like to ask the member why his party, instead of using rhetoric, is not standing and voting for Bill S-7, because this is what would protect women and children in Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to let you know that I will be sharing my time with the member for Vancouver Kingsway.

*Government Orders*

I would also like to acknowledge the work done by my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard. She is our party's critic for citizenship and immigration. She did excellent work consulting with organizations for abused women and with experts on the ground regarding violence against women and more specifically immigrant women. She was sensitive to these groups' needs. I also want to acknowledge all the work that she has done on this bill both in the House and in committee.

The NDP recognizes that it is absolutely necessary to address the problem of violence against women. I am talking here about all forms of violence. That is why we insist that it is necessary to have a national action plan to combat violence against women. Violence is truly devastating for all women, whether they are newcomers to Canada, aboriginal women, women with disabilities or young women. It is unacceptable for any Canadian woman to be in a vulnerable position just because she is a woman. As any women's organization in Canada can attest, we really need a national action plan to address violence against women and put an end to this problem.

The Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses has worked with many women's groups that advocate for and work with women in all kinds of situations across Canada to come up with an action plan and develop a strategy to end violence against women. I would like to share what Lise Martin, executive director of the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses, said:

Canada needs a coherent, coordinated, well-resourced National Action Plan on Violence Against Women. The Canadian Network of Women's Shelters has led a collaborative process with over 20 partners in the violence against women sector which has resulted in a blueprint for Canada's National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Girls. The Blueprint provides a roadmap of where we need to go and how to get there. M-444 is an important step in this direction.

Motion No. 444 was moved by my colleague from Churchill. The goal was to create a national action plan. The Conservatives voted against the motion. The Conservative Party is obviously not the party that is doing the most for women. Rather, it is the party that is halting progress in the fight to end violence against women.

It is not just the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses, with all the work it has done, that is saying that the problem of violence against women needs to be addressed through a pan-Canadian strategy. I would like to quote Deepa Mattoo, who is a staff lawyer with the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario and an expert on early and forced marriages. She said the following:

Violence against women happens to women irrespective of their age, religion, background, education and class. It is important that we do not tackle the issues of violence in silos and have a broader inclusive strategy to tackle all forms of violence against women. It is also important that we remember that men and families need to be engaged in our strategies to tackle violence against women moving forward.

She also supported Motion No. 444 by my colleague from Churchill, which the Conservatives voted against, I must point out again.

Violence against women has reached shocking levels in Canada, especially among indigenous and racialized women, women with disabilities and women in the LGBT community. The call for a national action plan is coming from all major feminist organizations

in Canada as well as the United Nations, which is calling on all countries to quickly adopt a national action plan.

• (1310)

However, Bill S-7 is a dangerous bill that could not only fail to protect vulnerable women and girls, but also make them even more vulnerable and more at risk of violence or negative consequences. Women who are victims of systemic, overt racism are often at higher risk for experiencing both poverty and violence. As well, racialized and majoritarian women have a hard time finding culturally appropriate anti-violence services, emergency assistance and housing. Immigrant women are often isolated from services to combat violence against women, and they are more exposed to violence than other women.

The NDP opposed Bill S-7 at second reading in the House of Commons and it moved a motion to change the focus of the bill. This motion called on the government and the House to:

(a) strongly condemn the practice [of violence against women and forced marriages]; (b) increase funding to organizations working with potential or actual victims; (c) consult with women, communities, organizations, and experts to form a true picture of the issue and to identify the best ways to address it; (d) allow women with conditional permanent resident status to remain in Canada if their partners are deported due to polygamy or forced marriage; (e) invest in information programs tailored to immigrant women; (f) develop culturally appropriate training programs for service providers dealing with immigrant women such as the police and social workers, as well as officers of the Canada Border Service Agency and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration; (g) restore funding to Status of Women Canada; and (h) implement the NDP's national plan for a strategy to address violence against women.

This motion was moved by my colleague, the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard and it is essentially the NDP's position and strategy for addressing forced marriage and the violence committed against these women.

The studies by the Senate and the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration brought to light several concerns about Bill S-7 in particular. The NDP tried to amend the bill to change the offensive short title, as my colleague mentioned this morning in her speech. It also wanted to ensure that victims would not be penalized by some of the measures in Bill S-7. Unfortunately all the amendments were rejected by the Conservative majority on the committee.

As I said, the first amendment would have deleted the short title, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. The NDP really wanted to change it. Unfortunately, the amendment was rejected. Violence against women is clearly barbaric, but is it cultural? No, violence affects all women, as my colleague explained so well this morning.

Second, we proposed deleting the clause that would allow an immigration officer to refuse entry to Canada to people seeking to live here or visit Canada or to deport people if they are suspected of practising polygamy in the past or present or planning to practise it in the future. In committee, lawyer Chantal Desloges really stressed that there is currently no definition of polygamy. That is clearly a huge flaw in the bill.

*Government Orders*

Third, we called for the removal of the provision criminalizing an individual who attended a forced marriage. It is not hard to understand why. The purpose is to protect victims. This measure would increase social pressure and stigmatization, discouraging witnesses and victims from reporting forced marriages out of fear that their friends and family would end up with a criminal record.

Many experts working on the ground believe that Bill S-7, like other poorly thought-out bills from this government, risks making the victims we say we want to protect even more vulnerable. I do not understand why the government does not heed these warnings and why it is going ahead with a bill that, clearly, instead of helping women, is making their situation even worse. As my colleague mentioned this morning, we approved of parts of the bill. We absolutely agree that there is a problem of forced marriages and women who are victims of sexual violence.

• (1315)

It is a problem we have to address, but unfortunately this wrong-headed bill is only going to expose these women to further violence.

[*English*]

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague opposite and was struck by some things I want to ask her about.

She said we need an action plan. I have been a minister of government, and I always used to say that programs are no substitute for actual results, and that spending is no substitute for getting some value for the people we are trying to assist. I heard the member say she will not support action but wants an action plan. This bill is an action plan.

Then the member said that the New Democrats had some amendments they wanted and that, unless they can get it perfect in their own view, they will not take any action. Would it not be better for the victims, the vulnerable people we are trying to protect with this bill, if we took this good action and then the New Democrats could argue for more or work for more later? It seems extremely short-sighted to hold everything up because, for good and sufficient reason, some of their amendments were not taken.

The member is saying that she and her party have a problem, but she is making all kinds of excuses not to take action. Why would that be?

• (1320)

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Mr. Speaker, we have a serious problem and it is the current government that is not taking action. Rather, it is bringing these bills forward that are marginalizing and driving further underground the women who are experiencing violence.

[*Translation*]

The experts tell us that women and girls on the ground want to be protected from violence, whether psychological, physical or otherwise, but they do not want to be put in a situation where they have to see their families prosecuted. This criminalization is not really the solution.

Community representatives and the witnesses who appeared before the committee were clear. We need a Canada-wide strategy to address violence against women.

[*English*]

A national action plan to put an end to violence against women is not something that can be put together very quickly and cannot be put together in the next month before an election plan. What we need to do is sit down with organizations across the country and build a plan that has clear targets and is coherent, so that we stop doubling our efforts and actually get to the problem. Rather than throwing money or bills at it, we need to address the problem of violence against women in this country.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges we see with much of the legislation that is tabled by the government is that it addresses the problem after the incident. It deals with it in reaction, as opposed to in terms of prevention. Surely this House and this country would be better served if the women of Canada had access to affordable housing, affordable child care, jobs that pay equally, and a platform on which to build their lives rather than the government constantly taking care of issues after the fact with such measures as the DNA database for missing and murdered indigenous women or the parental controls that it is now advocating through this oddly named bill.

Would the member care to respond?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to talk about something that I wanted to address in my speech but could not because I ran out of time.

That is why a national action plan to combat violence against women must go hand in hand with an action plan for safe and affordable housing. Giving women access to decent, safe, affordable housing is one way to prevent violence. It allows women to leave a violent relationship and live in a safer neighbourhood, and it reduces the stress associated with a lack of money. A long-term national housing strategy is therefore an integral part of an action plan to end violence against women. Such a plan also requires stable ongoing funding for organizations and support for counselling, assistance and trauma services on the ground. All of these things are needed to prevent violence against women.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives do not understand that all of these things are necessary in order for women to live in safety.

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today to speak and bring the perspective of the constituents of Vancouver Kingsway to this important debate.

I want to start by talking about something that I think all members of the House agree on and that comprises the fundamental aims of the bill. I support the intent of the bill, which is the fight against polygamy, forced marriages, and underage marriages. I, like every member in the House, believe strongly that all violence against women and children is unacceptable and that much remains to be done to prevent and combat these crimes. No woman, or anybody really, should be subject to gender-based violence, including the practices of forced marriage and underage marriage.



*Government Orders*

I have been in the House almost seven years and, at our best, we as members of Parliament come together and have respectful dialogues about different perspectives that can be brought to bear on some of these complicated problems. I have also been in the House when I think the worst of debate has occurred, which is when we engage in ad hominem attacks and when we substitute base accusations for careful and reasoned analysis.

We have seen examples of that when someone stands in the House and accuses members of standing with the pornographers if they do not support legislation, or of siding with the terrorists if they do not support legislation. I have heard in the House already today the member for Vancouver South suggesting that those who may have some problems with the way the bill is framed somehow have their commitment to standing up for the rights of women and children called into question. I think that is disrespectful and regrettable.

This is a bill that, while well-intentioned and, broadly speaking, aimed at something that all members of the House share as a laudable goal to be dealt with by the House, has some significant and some profoundly important problems. That is why we stand in the House today to voice those problems with the bill, as a good opposition ought to do in a British parliamentary system.

I also point out that the New Democrats, the Liberal Party, and the Green Party at committee tried to improve the bill and address the deficiencies and make the bill stronger and better and submitted some 11 different amendments that would have allowed every member in the House to stand up and support the bill unanimously. As is typical and all too common and regrettable with the Conservative government, it rejected all 11 of those amendments and, even worse, something we are seeing all too often with the government, without any real honest consideration of those amendments. That is very unfortunate.

I will start with one of the main problems with the bill and that is the title: zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. Now, I am trained as a lawyer and I started reading law in 1985. I am very familiar with the titles of legislation, and the typical practice in Canadian legal history is that bills are titled in a neutral way to capture the essence of the bill. What I have seen for the first time in the history of Canada is that the government began early in its term to politicize and sensationalize the titles of bills. Frankly, that is also extremely regrettable. It may be politically beneficial for the moment for that particular party, but it does a disservice to the profound importance and respect we all should have for legislation in this country.

As is said, words matter, and the title “zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act” is problematic. We have heard from witness after witness as to why that is the case. There are two main reasons why that title ought not to be in the bill. First of all, it is inaccurate. The practice of polygamy, for instance, which is one of the aims of the bill, is not a cultural practice. In fact, it is actually in some cases, a religious practice.

• (1325)

Where I come from in British Columbia, we have had ongoing legal disputes with a group of people who live in Bountiful. They are a breakaway sect of the Mormon Church who believe that polygamy

is religiously ordained and religiously permissible. That is not a cultural practice; it is a religious practice. However, we do not name this bill “zero tolerance for barbaric religious practices act”, and it would be offensive if we did so.

The second reason that this title is offensive is that several groups, particularly Muslims in this country right now, have expressed a certain sensitivity to legislative, political, cultural, and social pressure being brought to bear on them and feel that this title actually singles them out, which makes them uncomfortable.

New Democrats pointed that out to the government, asking the Conservatives to change the title by dropping the word “cultural”. What if the bill said “zero tolerance for barbaric practices act”? When everybody in this House could agree, the government refused. It refused to drop the word “cultural”.

I hear members talk about the opposition simply not being happy with a couple of cosmetic changes to the bill. Really, that is inaccurate. We were trying to improve the bill both in accuracy and in social acceptability, and the government chose to reject that.

The bill could also have serious unintended consequences, including increasing social pressure against victims of forced marriage and deporting victims of polygamy. We are also concerned that the criminalization of everybody involved in the solemnization of a polygamous marriage or a marriage that involves someone who is a minor risks having this legislation achieve the exact opposite of its aim. This is the famous law of unintended consequences.

Everybody in this House—including the government, I think—is well intentioned and wants to try to put a stop to these practices. Witness after witness at committee said that if we criminalize an entire family and compel children or family members to accuse their parents or family members of a criminal act, maybe they will be less likely to complain about the event, and we may end up driving these practices even further underground, which would make these practices more prevalent, not less prevalent.

We believe that instead of introducing a flawed bill that does not really get to the root of the problem, the government should commit to widespread and meaningful action with community groups and experts so that the real issues that these practices engender are addressed. I would argue for a multi-faceted approach to address such things as safe and affordable housing, counselling, and help for the often traumatized families who are trying to navigate complicated justice and immigration systems.

I want to read a couple of quotes that were made at committee, because they really get to the essence of the problem.

Lawyer Chantal Desloges pointed out the absence of a clear definition of polygamy. She said:

Practising polygamy is not really defined. The bill refers us to the Criminal Code definition of polygamy, but if you read the Criminal Code definition, that also is not very well defined and leaves a huge grey zone for interpretation as to what it means to be practising polygamy in Canada.

We know that polygamy is actually tied up in the legal system now, and there are charter and constitutional issues. This is an issue with the bill that I think would need more work.

*Government Orders*

Dr. Hannana Siddiqui give an excellent description of the problem with criminalization. She said:

The problem for us was that we worked directly with survivors and victims. A lot of them are girls and young women who say to us, "I do want protection from the police, but I don't want to prosecute my parents or my family. I don't want to see them go to jail." They clearly said that if they went to the police and they were going to prosecute, then they would withdraw their charges; they would not cooperate or would not even go to the police in the first place.

Victims said that if we criminalize it, it might mean that their family ties would be broken forever. This is another unintended consequence I was referring to.

We already have laws across this country that set a minimum age for marriage in this country. It is actually not necessary for the federal government to set a minimum age of marriage, because every province has a minimum age. It varies from province to province, I understand, but that is another criticism of the bill that I have seen: it is redundant.

• (1330)

Also, forced marriage could be caught by any one of a number of sections of the Criminal Code already, including transferring a minor across provincial borders, assault, uttering threats, coercion, intimidation, et cetera. Arguably, even the sections of the bill that go to forced marriage are unnecessary.

I will give my colleagues on the government side of the House credit for wanting to address some serious issues, but I think that by working together, all members of this House can make the bill better. By co-operating, we can pass legislation that everybody in this House can support. That would be the aim of every parliamentarian, but that is not the case with the bill before us.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his well-documented speech.

If it is true that we have the right to expect this Parliament to deal with such issues with as much dignity and as much attention to what people have to say as possible—the reason why we are here in this Parliament is to talk and pass better laws—does my colleague not find it surprising that the Liberal Party did not propose any amendments regarding polygamy, which was the first problem that he raised?

• (1335)

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the subject of polygamy and I thank my hon. colleague for bringing it up, because it allows me to raise another potential problem with the bill and show another potential negative consequence of it.

The bill includes a provision that would compel the deportation of those who are practising polygamy, including the people who are victims of it. Attacking the issue of domestic violence through immigration and criminal law is wrong-headed. As one witness said:

...the bill seeks to deport individuals who are engaged in polygamy, including the women that the government says it is trying to protect. The denial of permanent and/or temporary resident status to people involved in polygamous relationships will not have the desired effect of protecting women. It will simply bar women in such relationships from coming to Canada in the first place.

Likewise, criminalizing forced marriage will not end this practice.... It would only drive it further underground and harm survivors of forced marriage....

Many of these victims do not want to complain about it, nor do they have the means to do so.

Again we see that while a laudable goal has been pursued here, the mechanism that has been selected by the government, after listening to experts and after thorough study, shows that perhaps it is not going to achieve its intended purpose. Deporting people who are victims of polygamy to another country only to suffer from the results of polygamy is a good example of how the bill fails in that regard.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway for the speech he just delivered in the House on Bill S-7.

We have talked a lot in the House about protecting the rights of women and children, and that brings me to an extremely important subject that has gotten quite a bit of attention over the past few weeks: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on residential schools. Unfortunately, too many first nations children have experienced the full range of the negative repercussions of those events on their communities.

When it comes to the rights of women and children, does my colleague think that it is important to come up with meaningful solutions for all women and children across the country? Among other things, what about implementing one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 recommendations, the one about launching an investigation into missing and murdered aboriginal women?

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for an excellent question and an astute observation that gets to the heart of what we are doing in this place.

To govern is to identify priorities and make choices. The government has the privilege, while it has a majority, to indicate what it thinks the priorities facing this country are.

In my view, the absolutely appalling historic and current treatment of our first nations, including men, women, and children, is of momentous importance and is of such pressing social need that we should be tackling it in this House with much more vigour than we have been. There are people living on reserve in this country who are living in third world conditions. We have Canadians who do not have access to potable water. We have first nations children who get one-third the amount of money spent on their education that a typical non-aboriginal child does in this country. These are very important issues.

*Government Orders*

I would conclude by saying that I have heard a lot of talk by Conservatives in this House about their concern for women and girls, and I believe that their views are sincerely held. However, over 1,200 aboriginal women and girls in this country have been murdered or are missing. When all of the groups involved in this across the country are calling for a royal commission to find out exactly what is going on, why this has happened, and what steps should be taken, and that call is rejected by the government, then I think that is also a missed priority.

• (1340)

**Hon. Bal Gosal (Minister of State (Sport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for beautiful Wild Rose. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this important debate.

In Canada, we are proud of women in leadership and their roles. We can see that in this House. Especially, we are always exploring ways in which barriers preventing anyone from living to their full potential can be removed. I am very proud that last night I was at a FIFA World Cup game in Montreal. This tournament is happening coast to coast and is a great showcase for Canadians in women's leadership roles. This is one example of women acting as great role models and being a great inspiration to all Canadians.

Unfortunately, there are many young women and girls who are not given the same opportunities. In the most recent Speech from the Throne, our Conservative government committed to ensuring that women and girls would no longer be brutalized by violence, including through the inhumane practices of early and forced marriages on Canadian soil.

I am pleased that our government is focused on strengthening the protection of all women in Canada and Canada's immigration system and on forcefully and resolutely supporting the rights of all Canadian women. In order to do so, the government must ensure that Canada's immigration policies and practices are especially focused on strengthening the protection of immigrant women as well. Indeed, it is deeply troubling that harmful cultural practices such as polygamy and forced and underage marriages still exist as a reality for some Canadian women. That is why I am happy to note the government's proactive approach today toward decreasing the vulnerability of immigrant and newcomer women.

For example, the regulations put in place in recent years have made it much more difficult for people convicted of crimes that result in bodily harm against members of their family or others, particularly violent offences, to support any family class members to come to Canada.

Other measures have been introduced to deter foreign nationals from entering into marriages of convenience to gain permanent resident status in Canada. These measures include a two-year conditional permanent resident status for certain sponsored spouses.

However, to protect sponsored spouses who are in an abusive relationship, our government put in an exception to these measures in instances where there is evidence of any abuse of a physical, sexual, psychological, or financial nature. This exception would also include those who are victims of forced marriage. Better guidelines and training have been introduced to assist front-line officers in processing requests for exceptions based on abuse or neglect and in handling sensitive information related to abusive situations.

As members can recall, the member for Mississauga South introduced a motion last fall to bar the accommodation of proxy, telephone, Internet, and fax marriages for immigration purposes because they may facilitate non-consensual marriages. Our government supported this motion.

While it should be noted that the practice of forced marriage can victimize men and boys, girls and women are more affected by this tradition. Women and girls who are forced to marry someone against their wishes are almost always also beset by a list of other restrictions of their human rights. These are restrictions that deny them education and the opportunity to find employment and place limits on their mobility. These are all against our Canadian values of freedom for all.

Why are immigrant women particularly vulnerable to harm caused by these practices? For one thing, they might not have knowledge of French and English, which can be a barrier to accessing social services and information on their legal rights in an abusive relationship. Some women may also lack the economic independence to leave abusive situations, especially if they are under age.

Under Canada's settlement programs for newcomers, the government also provides funding to a variety of organizations that offer programs and services that respond to specific needs of permanent residents, including immigrant women and their families who find themselves in vulnerable situations.

• (1345)

Also, Canada's citizenship study guide, Discover Canada, and the Welcome to Canada orientation guide are both being updated to reflect the fact that Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to harmful practices such as forced marriage or other forms of gender-based family violence.

Canada's Minister of Citizenship and Immigration devoted a considerable amount of time meeting with representatives of organizations that provide services to immigrant women, and with victims of abuse, at a number of round table discussions across the country. These important discussions focused on domestic violence, polygamy, forced marriages, the immigration process, and how to strengthen the protection of vulnerable women and girls. The result is Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act.

Canada is a very generous and tolerant country, and we want to keep it that way. I am sure we can agree that Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to underage, forced, or polygamous marriage or to other harmful cultural practices that deny gender equality.

*Government Orders*

In this country, we do not and should not accept spousal abuse, so-called honour killings, or other gender-based violence. That is why measures in the bill would also amend the Criminal Code to address so-called honour killings and gender-based violence perpetrated against family members, usually women and girls, who are perceived to have brought shame or dishonour to the family.

Under our Criminal Code, someone charged with murder can raise the defence of provocation to obtain a reduction to a lesser charge of manslaughter. Measures in Bill S-7 would amend the Criminal Code so that legal conduct by a victim could not be legally considered a provocation. This would preclude accused murderers, including those involved in honour killings, from trying to reduce the charge they faced by using the argument that a victim's legal conduct provoked them into a heat of passion and that they killed while in that state.

In summary, the measures in Bill S-7 would strengthen our laws to protect Canadians and newcomers to Canada from barbaric cultural practices. The measures in Bill S-7 would improve protection and support for vulnerable individuals, especially women and girls, by rendering permanent and temporary residents inadmissible if they practised polygamy in Canada, by strengthening Canadian marriage and criminal laws to combat forced and underage marriages, and by ensuring that the defence of provocation would not apply in so-called honour killings and in many spousal homicides. That is why this bill is so important.

As legislators, it is our duty to uphold the equality of men and women under the law. I would go so far as to say that this is a fundamental Canadian value. Nevertheless, we must recognize that thousands of Canadian women and girls continue to be subject to violence and that barbaric cultural practices still exist as a reality for many Canadian women.

By supporting these measures and ensuring that they pass into law, Parliament would be sending a strong message that we will not tolerate on Canadian soil any practices that deprive anyone of their human rights. I have no doubt that everyone in this House would agree that in our capacity as representatives of the people of Canada, we have an obligation to always support victims of violence and abuse and to do everything we can to prevent such practices from happening in this country.

Our government is taking steps to strengthen our laws to help ensure that no young girl or woman in Canada becomes a victim of early or forced marriage, polygamy, so-called honour-based violence, or any other form of harmful cultural practice I urge all my colleagues in this House to support Bill S-7.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I gather that standing up for female victims of violence is very important to him. I have one simple question for him: why did he vote against our motion for a national action plan to end violence against women knowing full well that one in three women in Canada will, in her lifetime, be a victim of sexual, physical or psychological violence?

● (1350)

[*English*]

**Hon. Bal Gosal:** Mr. Speaker, we all know that violence against women is very bad, and that is why we brought in Bill S-7.

Any measures we have brought in to support victims, the opposition parties, especially the NDP, have voted against.

Bill S-7 is very important, especially in immigrant communities, because of so-called honour killings and polygamous marriages. We need to send a strong message that this government is standing up for victims. We are helping victims get their rights. Human rights are a fundamental Canadian value. Freedom is a fundamental Canadian value.

Opposition members always oppose any measures we put forward. I urge the member to read this bill and support it so we can protect vulnerable women and girls.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all understand Canadian values with regard to issues like polygamy and forced marriages, having young girls at the age of 12 being forced to get married. These are all issues that defy Canadian values.

There is some merit in the legislation. The Liberals will be voting in favour of the legislation. Having said that, Liberals are very concerned about the title of the bill, which no doubt comes right from the Prime Minister's Office. No one questions that there are types of actions that are of a barbaric nature, but there does not seem to be any rationale for tying in the word "cultural". Domestic violence and the abuse of women occur in all societies.

Why does the member believe that the Prime Minister is so insistent about inserting the word "cultural" with the word "barbaric", knowing that it offends a great number of Canadians and that it does absolutely nothing for the content of the bill itself?

**Hon. Bal Gosal:** Mr. Speaker, it is very funny to hear Liberals saying they support the bill but do not like the title. For 10 years, they did nothing for immigration. Under the Liberals' watch, the immigration system was broken, and we are trying to fix it.

Polygamous marriages and honour killings are cultural practices in a lot of communities. We want to send a clear message to Canadians that we are standing behind victims. We are standing behind vulnerable women and girls. The message needs to be sent. Therefore, the title is very important so that people will know that we will not tolerate these cultural practices and that we are standing with victims.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a little rich to hear the Liberals speak about the title of a bill when they voted against the Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act, the Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act, and the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act. They say they support this bill, but they do not like the title.

*Statements by Members*

I appreciated the hon. member's speech. It was very informative. My question for him is as follows. With regard to empowering young women and girls to speak out when someone in their families perpetrates such an atrocity on them, such as a forced marriage or abuse, how important does he think it is for women and girls to know that they can speak out on Canadian soil and get support when they need it?

**Hon. Bal Gosal:** Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. It goes to the heart of this bill.

As we know, one victim is one too many. The zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act would send a clear message to those coming to Canada that forced marriage, honour-based violence, and other harmful cultural practices are not acceptable in Canada. That is the clear message we want to send, and that is what the bill would do. It would send a clear message to everyone around the country.

• (1355)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before we resume debate, I will let the hon. member for Wild Rose know that there are only about four minutes remaining in the time before we have to go to statements by members. We will get him started, and I will give him the usual indication when he needs to wrap up.

The hon. member for Wild Rose.

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak today in support of Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act.

In October 2013, our government committed to ensuring that early and forced marriages do not take place on Canadian soil. Bill S-7 delivers on that very promise. The bill proposes to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act, and the Criminal Code to enhance the existing protections against harmful and violent practices that are perpetrated primarily against women and girls.

I would like to take this opportunity to elaborate on the bill and to compare our government's measures to some of our peer countries.

As Canada's citizenship and immigration minister explained before the Senate committee on human rights, all violent acts committed against women and girls are unacceptable in a democratic Canada. That is why our government has taken action, and continues to, to address various forms of violence against women and girls.

Bill S-7 supplements Canada's robust responses to violence against women and girls by addressing some areas where gaps have been identified, such as the response to early and forced marriages, and it strengthens the legislative tools in relation to other forms of gender-based violence, such as polygamy, so-called honour killing, and spousal homicide.

The bill addresses certain forms of violence against women and girls that reflect antiquated notions of women as property or as mere vessels of family honour and reputation. These notions are clearly inconsistent with the fundamental Canadian value of equality between men and women.

The zero tolerance for barbaric practices act introduces important legislative measures that would protect potential and actual victims of early and forced marriages.

I would like to turn now to the proposed new Criminal Code offence of active participation in an underage or forced marriage ceremony.

There has been significant debate about how best to address the issue of forced marriage and about whether a criminal law provision would make reporting more difficult. Nonetheless, many international organizations, including the Council of Europe and the United Nations, have been calling on states to specifically criminalize forced marriage. For example, UN Women, the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, recommends that:

Legislation should criminalize forced marriage, and should acknowledge that any child marriage is by definition a forced marriage.

This is exactly what Bill S-7 proposes to do with the new offence of forced and underage marriage. Moreover, at least 11 similarly situated countries have introduced criminal offences in relation to forced marriage over the past decade or so. The following countries have enacted forced marriage offences, with maximum penalties ranging from two to seven years of imprisonment: the United Kingdom, Sweden, Australia, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, and Norway.

Mr. Speaker, it looks to me like you are about to tell me that my time is up for the moment. I look forward to continuing after question period.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Wild Rose is very observant. Indeed, he will have six minutes remaining when the House next resumes debate on the question, likely later today.

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

### ABENAKI MUSEUM

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, the Abenaki Museum opened its doors to visitors who wanted to discover Abenaki culture and heritage: 50 years of collaboration with the Odanak community.

To mark the occasion, a new exhibit will pay tribute to all those who founded the museum, supported it and kept it going all these years. This exceptional exhibit runs until December 23, 2016. It is a must-see.

Since 2011, the museum has won 11 recognition awards. In a little more than six months, the museum won four awards of excellence and recognition: the Société des musées du Québec Excellence Award, the National Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Award, the Quebec Aboriginal Tourism Award in the Interpretation Site category, and the Canadian Museums Association Award of Excellence.

*Statements by Members*

The museum earned these awards of distinction for its innovative archeological projects and for its research, which promotes understanding and learning. I invite my colleagues to not only come visit the Abenaki Museum this summer, but also and especially to come discover and learn about the rich heritage of the Abenaki people.

\* \* \*

● (1400)

[English]

**PRAIRIE GLEANERS SOCIETY**

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to stand in the House to speak about an organization that I support, the Prairie Gleaners Society.

The Prairie Gleaners is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organization that receives donations of vegetables that are from greenhouses and farmers to prepare for the needy of the world. They are then sealed in packages and sent mostly overseas in areas where chronic hunger is widespread.

The Prairie Gleaners recently hosted an open house session to give locals a chance to see exactly what its work entailed and to explain how its projects worked. The veggies are chopped into smaller pieces by volunteers then dehydrated and shipped. It is also working locally with food banks to deliver relief to families in our communities.

As a volunteer organization, it ships roughly three million meals every year. Having tasted the delicious soups from the packages that I made myself as a volunteer, I am pleased that such an efficient and helpful volunteer operation is run out of Medicine Hat.

I wish all of the volunteers, the caring folks who give so much of their time to make the Prairie Gleaners run on a daily basis, all the best in the future.

\* \* \*

**CANADIAN INTERUNIVERSITY SPORT**

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is with the pride of the Lancer nation that I rise today in the House to acknowledge the University of Windsor women's basketball and men's track and field team. Both recently won their respective national championships in the Canadian Interuniversity Sport.

The Lancer women's basketball team has etched its place in history as one of only two teams to win five national championships in a row, and it remains the unquestioned benchmark in the CIS.

The Lancer men's track and field team has an equally impressive legacy of dominance in the CIS competition. The 2015 title marks the 20th time that the Lancer men's team has won the national championship.

Both squads compete with determination and discipline, embodying the character of their coaches and the community that supports them.

Coaches Chantal Vallée and Dennis Fairall, both recognized as coach of the year in their respective sports, have built programs around a very simple philosophy: Team first and do not quit: Win.

I congratulate the entire Lancer family on these incredible accomplishments and wish them continued success. Go, Lancers.

\* \* \*

**MAGNA CARTA**

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the Magna Carta, first issued and signed by King John on June 15, 1215, in a meadow in Runnymede, England.

British jurist Lord Denning called the Magna Carta, “the greatest constitutional document of all time – the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot”.

The Magna Carta laid the foundations for many rights and freedoms. Clause 39 guaranteed key legal rights like due process in trials. It guaranteed the right not to be deprived of property, except by due process. Clause 9 guaranteed certain commercial rights and the rights of guilds. Clause 1 guaranteed the right of the church not to be interfered with by the state. The Magna Carta made the monarch accountable to a council in fulfilling commitments.

Eight hundred years ago, the Magna Carta made the Crown subject to the rule of law. No one was above the law, including the Crown.

\* \* \*

**DICK MACLEAN**

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember a legend of eastern Prince Edward Island.

Dick MacLean started in 1953 with a \$97 concrete mixer bought in the Eaton's catalogue, and built an empire from the ground up which grew into a fleet of 16 ready mix trucks and 25 tractor trailers.

Mr. MacLean also tirelessly served his community for decades as a long time minor hockey coach and a member of the Community Welfare League of Montague, serving on the Montague Fire Department, Junior Board of Trade, Montague Museum Committee, as chair of the Kings County Memorial Hospital and helped to establish the Cavendish Farms Wellness Centre.

On behalf of all members of the House of Commons, I send our condolences to Dick MacLean's wife, Mary, his children, John and Doug, friends and family, and all of those who were privileged enough to know such a great man.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

**CALGARY**

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this summer, I invite all members of the House and all Canadians to visit our great city of Calgary to enjoy some world-class events.

*Statements by Members*

In July, our city hosts the greatest outdoor show on Earth, the Calgary Stampede. Join me and people from around the world at Stampede breakfasts, barbecues, exhibitions and, of course, the most exciting rodeo in the world.

At the end of June, Calgary hosts “Canada One”, at Spruce Meadows, one of the finest outdoor show jumping tournaments in North America.

Then there is GlobalFest, in my riding, which lights up the August skies with incredible pyro-musical firework displays and has delicious foods and dance performances from the many cultures in our community.

Then Calgary is the gateway to Banff National Park, Canada's oldest and grandest national park. Spend a day in Banff to enjoy the outdoors.

I invite all Canadians to come to Calgary this summer.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Louis-Roger Jean-Pierre is an eight-month-old Canadian child who is suffering from encephalopathy. According to the prognosis made by his doctors at Sainte-Justine Hospital, he does not have much time left.

Considering how ill her son is, Christina César, the boy's mother, who is Haitian, applied for a visitor's visa to come and see her son one last time. Ms. César submitted a letter of support from Sainte-Justine Hospital, but she was denied a visa. It is so sad that such a decision was made.

I hope the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration will show some compassion and intervene as soon as possible in favour of this grief-stricken mother, who cannot believe what is happening.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**HIGHWAY OF HEROES CHALLENGE CUP**

**Mrs. Pat Perkins (Whitby—Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize the Whitby Minor Lacrosse Association, which will be hosting the second annual Highway of Heroes Challenge Cup this weekend.

The cup is held in partnership with the Oakville Minor Lacrosse Association and is played in honour of the men and women who have sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

This one-day Box Lacrosse event will consist of a total of 18 games and will be played at the McKinney Centre in Whitby.

The Highway of Heroes Challenge Cup was born in celebration of the passion shared for lacrosse between the Whitby and Oakville clubs and was named after the section of the 401 named the Highway of Heroes.

I would like to thank both associations for fostering sportsmanship between Whitby and Oakville that instills the importance of commemorating our fallen heroes in our young athletes.

\* \* \*

**JEWISH NATIONAL FUND**

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I hope you will draw our attention a little later today to some 60 leaders of the Jewish National Fund who have come from across the country to be with us today.

Since its inception in 1901, the Jewish National Fund has been the most significant environmental organization in the Middle East, responsible for land, water and forest management the length and width of Israel.

The Jewish National Fund of Canada has been a leading contributor to a wide range of programs, from tertiary waste water treatment and reservoir building, to greening the deserts and reforestation of the fire-ravaged Haifa forest.

The JNF honoured the Prime Minister of Canada with the naming of the Hula Valley Bird Sanctuary Visitor and Education Centre last year, in recognition of his steadfast support of Israel and the Jewish people.

We thank the Jewish National Fund for a century of service to the land of Israel and its citizens, Jewish people everywhere.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**CHARLESBOURG—HAUTE-SAINT-CHARLES**

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last November, I had the honour of meeting with students from my riding who travelled to Ottawa. They were attending an important national event to fight the stigma of mental illness.

Last month, these students invited me to attend the first Quebec school summit on mental health and stigmatization. With the theme “head held high”, the mission of Saint-Jean Eudes school was to help young people break down the stigma associated with mental illness, raise awareness among young people and teach them how to respond appropriately in their personal and professional lives.

Last weekend I also had the opportunity to participate in an event put on by AQEPA, the Association du Québec pour enfants avec problèmes auditifs, which works to ensure that all children with hearing problems can achieve their full potential and are not subject to rejection or harassment, and that the parents have support for their children's education.

We can be proud of the initiatives of the people of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles who, day after day, are committed to making this a better world.

*Statements by Members*

● (1410)

*[English]***MARIJUANA**

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal vision for Canada is marijuana stores in every community, making marijuana as easy for children and teens to get as beer and tobacco, like Vancouver, which has more illegal marijuana dispensaries than Starbucks coffee shops.

In April, 63 young people in Vancouver ended up in the emergency room of St. Paul's Hospital suffering from nausea, palpitations and diminished consciousness in one day from marijuana poisoning.

Colorado rolled out legalization with tough regulations, yet 45 children have been treated in poison control centres after eating marijuana sweets. Almost half the adults arrested test positive for marijuana. Marijuana is the number one reason for DUI charges. Marijuana-related hospitalizations increased by 82% and marijuana-related traffic deaths doubled in the first five years.

How many Canadian children and teens have to get their stomach pumped or die in motor vehicle accidents before the Liberals admit their drug vision would be a nightmare for Canada's youth and their parents?

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on June 11, the Comité de vigilance des activités portuaires at the Port of Quebec had a look back on its second year of activity. Although it was disappointing that port users did not attend the committee meetings, it is important to note the remarkable involvement of the committee members, who give up many hours of their personal time.

Over the past four years, I have seen that many people are trying to understand the issues affecting them. It takes a lot of dedication to be a member of an advisory board or decision-making body. I have witnessed these efforts first-hand, whether we are talking about a housing roundtable, the decision-making board of a credit union or a citizen-driven rail traffic monitoring initiative. Hundreds of people are working to better understand their environment and are showing that they want to be full-fledged participants in their community.

Civic engagement contributes a great deal to our society. I would like to pay tribute to these people, who refuse to resign themselves to their situation and work every day to contribute to the common good.

\* \* \*

*[English]***TAXATION**

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, small businesses and middle-class workers of Brantford-Brant know that now is not the time for risky schemes and untested leadership. They

reject the Liberal leader's plan to impose a mandatory \$1,000 tax hike.

By pledging to enforce the Ontario Liberals' payroll tax increase on every employee and employer in Canada, the Liberal leader would burden our economy with wage cuts and jobs cuts. According to a CFIB survey of employers in Ontario, 69% indicated that they would have to freeze or cut salaries.

While the opposition wants to raise taxes, our government has cut the GST, introduced pension income splitting and created the tax-free savings account. Only our government can be trusted to keep taxes low for Canadians.

\* \* \*

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the secretive, manipulative Conservative government, Ottawa is broken and the faith of Canadians in government has never been lower.

Today, the Liberal leader announced a plan for fair and open government, a plan for real change and a commitment to gender balance in cabinet. A Liberal government would change the electoral system so all votes would count and Canadians would get a fairer and more representative Parliament.

Liberals will end the abuse of omnibus bills which result in poorly reviewed laws. We will open up the access to information system to include ministers' offices. Charities will be allowed to advocate for the people and issues they represent without fear of tax audit harassment. We will bring back the long form census, bring science back into government decision making and we will stop the government's practice of using taxpayer dollars for partisan advertising.

Canadians want real change and real accountability. It is obvious the present government can provide neither. Canadians want their trust in government restored. The Liberal Party has the only plan for real change to do just that.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, listen to this feedback from constituents in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga as it relates to our enhanced universal child care benefit. They say, "this is definitely the right way to go. We need to support young families", and "for my seven grandchildren, the more help they get from a fair Conservative government the better off they will be". Constituents in Kitchener—Conestoga strongly support our government's plan to reduce the tax burden on young, middle-class families.



*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS**

We make no apologies for ensuring middle-class families are aware of the measures that put more money back in their pockets. We want Canadians to know about the new family tax cut and the enhanced universal child care benefit, which will benefit 100% of families with kids, the vast majority of the benefits going to young and middle-income families.

We know the Liberals and NDP would raise taxes on the middle class. Canadians know that it is only our government they can trust to lower taxes.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

**42ND GENERAL ELECTION**

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the dying days of the current government, the Conservatives are rolling out photo ops, wasting millions on partisan advertising and still more on opinion polling, all on the taxpayers' dime. Gone are the Conservatives who promised reform. Gone are the Conservatives who wanted to put an end to Liberal corruption. Gone are the Conservatives who rode to Ottawa on the white horse of accountability. They came here to change Ottawa, but Ottawa changed them. Their senators are in court. They have shut down parliamentary debate over 100 times.

The leader of the third party, who broke his promise of open nominations to his own party, is now making 32 new promises.

Thankfully, change is in the air. In October Canadians can finally vote for the progressive change they want and actually get it.

\* \* \*

**CANADA-POLAND RELATIONS**

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure to accompany the Prime Minister as part of Canada's delegation to Poland to meet with Prime Minister Kopacz and President-elect Duda.

Poland is one of Canada's key NATO allies and our biggest trading market in central and eastern Europe, as well as a major partner in the fight against Putin's aggression in Ukraine.

This trip provided us with the opportunity to further strengthen the ties between Canada and Poland, as well as discuss future collaboration in the energy sector, research and innovation.

This visit also reaffirmed our commitment to stand tall in the face of Vladimir Putin's blatant disregard for international law and Ukraine's sovereignty.

Canada will continue to stand proudly with Poland and work together to foster the relationship with this important ally.

[*Translation*]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years under the Conservatives, middle-class families are working harder than ever, but they are struggling to make ends meet.

Our economy is suffering. The GDP has seen its biggest drop in six years. Our exports have fallen for the second straight quarter. BMO is forecasting the slowest economic growth outside of a recession in 30 years.

Does the Prime Minister believe that his economic plan is working, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, the facts are quite the opposite.

Canada has one of best economic track records in the period following the great global recession. We now have a balanced budget with lower taxes for Canadian families. We know very well that the NDP wants instead to increase taxes on families. That is a fundamental difference between our two parties.

[*English*]

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, successive governments have watched while hundreds of thousands of good manufacturing jobs have disappeared. Now, manufacturing slipped again in April, the third drop in four months.

With smart investments and a government that cares, we can help build a thriving sector. The NDP has proposed things like an innovation tax credit to boost investment in R and D and ensure that companies that are developing the advanced products and jobs for the future get the support that they need.

Why do Conservatives not have a plan to help our manufacturing sector and create jobs?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has the best job creation record among major industrial countries after the recession, with over 1.2 million net new jobs, the vast majority being well-paying, private sector, full-time jobs.

That is why the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, among others, have endorsed this government's economic action plan, and why they do not want the kind of tax hikes that the NDP proposes, not just for business, but for ordinary Canadians and ordinary families. Those would be bad for the economy, bad for Canadians.

We are determined to stay on the path we are on and have a good record for Canadians.

• (1420)

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, either the Conservatives do not have a plan or their plan is not working.

*Oral Questions*

Over the first quarter of this year, GDP shrank, business investment is down, exports are down, and job growth is stalling. Under the Conservatives, middle-class families are working harder but they are falling further behind. Meanwhile, Conservatives are giving billion dollar handouts to the wealthy few.

New Democrats know that a strong economy equals a strong middle class. Will the Conservatives scrap their handouts to the wealthy and instead invest in middle-class families and child care?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all the New Democrats care about are big bureaucracies and union bosses. That is not how to create jobs. Canada has one of the best job creation records and growing middle-class incomes, precisely because we make sure we are serving ordinary Canadian families and Canadian workers with policies that benefit them directly.

The NDP would like to take those away and give those to the bureaucracy. That is something that Canadian families and Canadian workers do not want. Countries that have tried it have terrible unemployment and terrible economic results.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is not only the middle class that has suffered.

After 10 years under the Conservatives, there has been a decline in transparency and democracy. A report by over 200 organizations across the country confirms what we have been condemning for some time: the Conservatives' muzzling of scientists, their intimidation of groups who disagree with their agenda and the elimination of the mandatory census that has hampered our ability to develop evidence-based policies.

Why is the Prime Minister so opposed to democracy, transparency and facts?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the organization to which the opposition member refers supports a terrorist group. It is not a free and democratic Canada they want. We will stand up as a government to defend rights and freedoms.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, here is one example of transparency. The Prime Minister should actually answer questions in question period. He has the worst attendance in modern history. How the Conservatives muzzle and silence anyone who disagrees with them is shocking—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster has the floor.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** They are very sensitive, Mr. Speaker, as they go down in the polls.

Conservatives muzzle and silence anyone who disagrees with them. The shocking new report from a coalition of more than 200 organizations documents abuses of parliamentary rules, intimidation

of public servants, and attacks on organizations that criticize the government.

Conservatives promised openness and accountability. What happened? Why has the Prime Minister broken all his promises to be open, transparent and democratic? Why is he—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the group in question is defending IRFAN-Canada, a listed terrorist organization in Canada. We will not take lessons from this organization nor from the opposition. Why are the NDP and the Liberals siding with terrorist organizations and organizations that are supporting them?

We will stand up for democracy and for the right of Canadians. We will stand up for them and protect Canadians.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to court documents, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness pressured the RCMP to destroy documents, documents within the jurisdiction of the Information Commissioner.

The minister knew it was illegal, as did the RCMP, and all the while they said the documents were safe, but that was a lie. Some officers even joked that the PMO would owe them a lot of drinks for helping them break the law.

Counselling illegal behaviour and cover-up; is this not reason enough to give the Information Commissioner the binding authority to order disclosure?

● (1425)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the issue at hand is, of course, the former long gun registry. It was this Parliament and this government that passed legislation explicitly to destroy that registry. The RCMP is acting upon that legislation. We obviously encourage them to do that.

I know that the Liberal Party wants to bring back the long gun registry, but that is against the wishes not only of this Parliament but also against the wishes of Canadians.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, he just keeps making it up.

The will of Parliament is not the illegal destruction of documents. The will of Parliament is not the obstruction of justice. The will of Parliament is not lying to the Information Commissioner.

If Canadians are going to trust their government, their government needs to trust them, trust them with access to information, trust them with the facts, trust them with the truth.

*Oral Questions*

Why does the government believe that it cannot accomplish its policy objectives without breaking the law? That is an attitude of a tin pot republic, not Canada.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the will of this Parliament is to destroy the long gun registry, and the will of this Parliament—

**An hon. member:** And the law of the land.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper:**—and the law of the land. The will of this Parliament is to make sure that the next Liberal government does not get a head start on trying to recreate such a long gun registry.

That is what Canadians were promised. That is what we have delivered.

Now, I do not know why it is that these guys in the Liberal Party are so obsessed with going after farmers and duck hunters, and they oppose mandatory prison sentences for people who actually use guns to commit crimes. That is what we stand for.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville has the floor.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister himself is talking about the next Liberal government, I want to point out that a Liberal government will rescind the unconstitutional retroactive legislation his government is trying to pass.

The Conservatives are simply trying to pass this legislation to hide their own wrongdoing when they interfered in the RCMP's business and violated the Access to Information Act.

Is it not time that the Access to Information Act covered the operations of the Prime Minister's Office and of his ministers?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, this government made a commitment to people in the regions that it would eliminate the long gun registry and impose mandatory minimum sentences on people who commit crimes with long guns and firearms. That is the policy and law in this country. That is the policy established by this Parliament, and the RCMP respects that.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are leaving too many Canadians behind. Under their watch, we have lost 400,000 good manufacturing jobs, and people are pushed to precarious work with no benefits and no job security.

Since 2008, two-thirds of all jobs created in Ontario have been part-time, temporary, or in self-employment.

Instead of giving handouts to the wealthy few, will the Conservatives give a break to the hard-working families who actually need one?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP confirmed today that its only plan for jobs is to raise taxes on those who create them. New Democrats want to raise taxes on business that hire, on workers who work, and on families who are trying to save.

We are doing precisely the opposite. Through trade, training, and tax cuts, our economy has generated 1.2 million net new jobs, 80% of them full-time and two-thirds of them in high-wage sectors.

We will continue to lower taxes for job creators and build on what is the greatest economic and job-creation record in the G7.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, under the Conservatives, the quality of our job market has reached a 25-year low. Canadian household debt is higher than ever, and families are struggling to make ends meet. The public is calling for a real change in direction.

Tomorrow we will vote on our motion for an economic policy that supports the middle class by helping small-business owners and the manufacturing sector to create jobs.

Will the Conservatives support Motion No. 585?

• (1430)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we will never support the New Democrat and Liberal plan, which would increase taxes for small and medium-sized businesses.

First, they are proposing a \$1,000 tax on every worker who earns \$60,000 a year. Second, they are proposing that we impose that same tax on small and medium-sized businesses. These are job-killing taxes. That is a huge risk.

We will do the opposite by lowering taxes for small and medium-sized businesses and creating jobs.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Information Commissioner of Canada, Suzanne Legault, has taken the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to court over the RCMP's illegal destruction of data. This is a serious matter.

It appears that the minister's office pressured the RCMP to violate the Access to Information Act by destroying the data prematurely.

Will the minister be transparent and tell us whether his office pressured the RCMP to destroy the data before the law took effect?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this matter is very clear. Parliament voted to abolish the wasteful and ineffective gun registry because it wanted to stop treating all of the hunters and fishers in this country like second-class citizens.

*Oral Questions*

That is why we reject any suggestion that the RCMP acted inappropriately in destroying the registry's obsolete data. We are proud that we carried out our mandate and respected the will of Parliament.

We will carry on and close the loopholes by means of the budget measures that will be passed by this Parliament.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE**

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I assume that is why the government is going to grant a pardon, with Bill C-59, for acts that were allegedly legal. In any case, it is a little hard to understand and to follow.

The Conservatives have mastered the art of taking Canadians for fools, and with just a few days left in this parliamentary session, they are introducing new bills that have no hope of being passed solely for electioneering purposes, including the bill on impaired driving and the bill on victims rights in the military justice system.

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

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, I would not be applauding, knowing that these bills will not make it through the legislative process.

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** Members are being a little premature in their applause. One would think that this far into the Parliament, I would not have to remind them to hold off on their applause until the member for Gatineau has finished asking her question.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, I would not be applauding if I were on the government side, knowing that these bills will not pass.

My question is simple: if those issues were such a priority for the Conservatives, why did they not introduce those bills earlier so they could go through the normal channels and have a chance to pass?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague very much for her question.

We are very proud to introduce bills before Parliament to protect Canadians. We are especially proud of our efforts to protect victims in Canada. That is always a priority for our government.

We will continue to work even harder until the very last day of this Parliament. I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what we have here is another example of the utter contempt for Canadians that the government has, and its total cynicism.

The government House leader has actually admitted that it is now tabling bills solely for Conservative partisan purposes, and it is actually using taxpayer money now to draft the Conservative election platform. Issues like impaired driving and ensuring justice for victims in the military require urgent action, so why did the Conservatives wait nearly a decade to table these bills and introduce them only when they know they have no chance of passing?

●(1435)

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said to the member's colleague, we have presented legislation throughout the life of this Parliament, presenting bills to protect victims, a victims bill of rights, cyber legislation under the justice department, bills that were presented to protect children from sexual predators, and now legislation that is designed specifically to protect Canadians from the carnage that occurs on our highways because of impaired drivers.

We intend to work until the very last day of Parliament. That is what Canadians expect. I encourage the hon. member to do the same thing.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the dying days of this tired government, the Conservatives are rolling out election-style photo ops, wasting millions on partisan advertising and public opinion polling, all on the taxpayer's dime, but now they are introducing bills that they have no intention of passing. This is a cynical, scandal-plagued government attempting to pull the wool over the eyes of Canadians one last time. It will not work.

How can the Conservatives justify this blatant self-serving attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of Canadians?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would simply ask the hon. member this. Does he just want to go back to his constituency early? Does he not want to work on the legislation that is currently before the House?

We intend to continue to work, whether it is presenting legislation, whether it is working in committees, whether it is showing up here to discuss the issues that matter. For us, what matters is protecting Canadians, their security, their economic security, working to protect and advance the rights of victims, ensuring that Canadians are feeling safe in their homes, that their incomes are protected, that they are paying less tax. We are building a better Canada. Show up for work.

\* \* \*

**PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Show up for work, Mr. Speaker? He should be mentioning that to the Prime Minister. The only work they have been doing lately is defending the perks of their insider pals.

*Oral Questions*

Yesterday, remember how they were defending the \$24.5 million hit to taxpayers so that the senators would not have to walk an extra block to work? Now the senators are telling us that Public Works is just wrong and it is only going to cost \$13.5 million to save them from walking a block. This is supposed to be a bargain. Only a senator and the Prime Minister would think it was a bargain to make taxpayers pay millions of dollars so that senators would have a cushier life.

When are they going to stop defending—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we do expect that the Senate will accept the building that offers the best value for taxpayers' dollars.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Senate is expensive enough as it is without adding temporary offices that are going to cost taxpayers \$13.5 million, or maybe \$24.5 million; it is not clear. Even \$1 would be too much to spend so that corrupt senators do not have to walk an extra block to get to work. It is unbelievable that the minister would rather defend these corrupt senators than stand up for taxpayers. We are paying for all this nonsense.

When will the minister stop indulging the Conservatives and the senators and get them to listen to reason?

[*English*]

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said, we do expect that the Senate will accept the building that offers the best value for taxpayers' dollars.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## JUSTICE

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there are just a few days left in this session, but the Conservatives are rushing to introduce a slew of bills that will never be passed or debated. This is nothing but a charade.

They know full well that these bills will not pass, but that matters little to them. First it was public servants, government advertising and opinion polls; now Parliament is being used in the Conservative Party's partisan campaign. They really take us for fools.

How can the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons justify yet another misuse of Canada's democratic institutions?

• (1440)

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, we are very proud of what we have presented in this session. We have continued to work hard every day for Canadians.

[*English*]

We have had many bills with respect to public safety and justice that are aimed specifically at protecting Canadians' interests, and we will continue to do so. The members opposite may work hard to prevent those measures coming before Parliament, but we are going to continue to work.

The hon. member may be anxious to get out of here. He is going to have a hard time getting a job at Yuk Yuk's the way he has been acting.

\* \* \*

## DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a report released today entitled “Dismantling Democracy: Stifling debate and dissent in Canada” outlines the shameful record of the Conservatives over the past 10 years. It is more evidence that Ottawa is indeed broken.

Today our leader introduced a comprehensive plan that focuses on a more transparent government, giving Canadians a voice in Ottawa, open and fair elections, evidence-based policy, and better service for all Canadians.

How is it that the current Conservative government that came to power promising more transparency has become the least transparent government in Canada's history?

**Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a bit rich to hear the Liberal leader and Liberals talk about fair and open government while he continues to fight against greater transparency and accountability for first nations and unions in Canada. It was our Conservative government, I will remind the member, that cleaned up the mess left by the Liberals in their sponsorship scandal.

The Liberals have opposed every effort we have made to bring accountability and transparency to Ottawa. It is hypocrisy on that side of the House.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after a decade of secretive and manipulative Conservative government, democracy in Ottawa is broken and Canadians' faith in it has never been lower.

Today the Liberal leader announced a plan for real change. Liberals would end the unrepresentative first-past-the-post voting system, engage the public in selecting a fairer one, and table electoral reform legislation within 18 months of forming government.

Will the Prime Minister finally join the vast majority of Canadians calling for a fairer, better, more representative electoral system for Canada?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the Liberal leader proposed mandatory voting, and we know how that is enforced. If people do not vote, then they would be forced under the Liberal plan, obviously, to pay a tax. That, of course, is the Liberals' solution to everything. They think we can solve every one of the nation's problems by simply imposing yet another Liberal tax.

They started today's question period by calling for the reintroduction of the long gun registry. Now they are finishing it by announcing that they want mandatory voting backed up by new taxes.

We would do exactly the opposite on both. We scrapped the Liberal long gun registry and we will never impose new taxes.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, do the Conservatives think it is acceptable for the Canada Revenue Agency to mislead people when answering their calls?

Do the Conservatives think it is acceptable to harass charitable organizations rather than targeting the billions of dollars sheltered in tax havens?

Do the Conservatives think it is acceptable for Canadians to fear the Canada Revenue Agency, which is supposed to serve them?

The Leader of the Liberal Party says “no” and has put forward a plan to have the Canada Revenue Agency serve Canadians once again.

What are the Conservatives going to do?

[English]

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CRA audits must occur at arm's length, conducted free of any political interference or motivation. It is clear from the Liberal leader's recommendations that he wants to politicize the CRA.

We expect charities to respect the law, and the CRA has legal responsibility to ensure that charitable dollars donated by charitable Canadians are used for charitable purposes.

The Liberal leader's plan would increase and subsidize the political activities of charities. Our Conservative government is working to remove politics, regardless of ideology, from charitable activities.

\* \* \*

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I am very proud to say that I signed Evidence for Democracy's pledge calling on the next federal government to stop muzzling scientists and to improve evidence-based decision-making. After years of Conservative funding cuts and the silencing of government scientists, Canadians have been clear: they want our scientists to be

allowed to speak publicly about their research, and they want government decisions to be based on evidence, not partisan attacks.

Will the Conservatives end their war on science and allow our scientists to share their research with Canadians?

• (1445)

**Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me make it clear. Our government has made record investments in science, technology, and innovation. Why? It is to create jobs and improve the quality of life for Canadians.

Canadian federal agencies and departments now publish several thousand science articles per year. We are proud of the work done by our scientists. Let me also add that while ministers are the primary spokespersons for our government departments, government scientists and experts are readily available to share their research with the media and the public.

[Translation]

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' talking points are not reassuring for the 4,000 scientists who have been let go.

Today, the NDP has made a solemn promise to stand up for science and put an end to the censorship of scientists. The NDP has put forward a real plan to return science to its rightful place.

When will the Conservatives end the muzzling of federal scientists and appoint a parliamentary science officer so that the government can make decisions that are based on science and not ideology?

**Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to supporting science, technology and innovation.

In fact, in 2007, our government created the Science, Technology and Innovation Council. The council provides the government with external strategic advice on science and technology and prepares reports on Canada's performance.

\* \* \*

**AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 130 flagships of the Canadian aerospace industry, including Groupe Meloche in Beauharnois—Salaberry, will be in the spotlight at the 51st Paris Air Show. Our aerospace companies will have the opportunity to showcase their world-class expertise, know-how and innovations.

Unfortunately, while job losses are multiplying in Canada's aerospace industry, the Conservative ministers missed their flight to go and represent Quebec and Canadian companies at the world's largest aerospace trade show.

What are the Conservatives waiting for? When will they promote Canada's commitment to our aerospace sector and jobs?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there are people there representing Canada. My deputy minister and other government aides are there to promote and celebrate our aerospace industry.

We also took practical measures in the budget to protect and promote our aerospace industry across the country. The Aerospace Industries Association of Canada said that budget 2015 was very good news for Canadian companies, our employees and our economy.

We are taking practical measures to support the future of our aerospace industry. Great progress will certainly be made in the future.

[*English*]

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that answer is of little comfort to the 1,480 Bombardier workers who are losing their jobs in Toronto and Montreal.

After a decade of Conservative rule, the challenges facing aerospace are just one part of the huge issue facing Canada's manufacturing sector. The Conservatives cut \$500 million in vital support for research and development, and it is Canadian workers who are paying the price. With more and more good jobs lost, will the Conservatives finally admit that their plan for aerospace is a failure?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of workers and jobs, of course Statistics Canada reported that in the month of May, 60,000 new jobs were created. Of those 60,000, 22,000 of them were in the manufacturing sector.

With regard to the aerospace sector, the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada's 2015 report compared Canada with other OECD countries and reported that Canada's aerospace industry is number one in productivity, number one in civil flight simulation, and number three in research and development.

All of the organizations in this country, every single one of them, that support and work with the aerospace sector have endorsed our budget, because we are taking concrete action to build the aerospace sector.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mrs. Pat Perkins (Whitby—Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Liberals and NDP support a mandatory payroll tax hike on Canadian families. Can the Minister of State for Finance update the House on our government's actions to help Canadians save more money for their priorities?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Whitby—Oshawa for the question. She is correct. Now is not the time for risky schemes and untested leadership. Our Conservative government rejects the \$1,000 tax hike the Liberal leader wants to impose on middle-class workers.

By contrast, our Conservative government has lowered taxes and has created new incentives for Canadians to save. Included in that is the tax-free savings account we just enhanced and the pooled registered pension plan.

Only our government can be trusted to keep taxes low for Canadians.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, at a moment when the number of refugees worldwide has never been so high, the number of refugee claimants in Canada has reached record lows. We have gone from 40,000 claimants in 2000 to 13,000 in 2013. The results are clear. The Conservatives are systematically destroying Canada's proud history of welcoming those in need.

No matter how much Conservatives ignore it, caring for one another remains a core Canadian value. Is the minister really proud of his government's failure to sustain Canada's history of refugee settlement?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we do have a proud history of refugee resettlement, and it never included accepting large numbers of refugee claims from the European Union, from other democracies, and from countries that have the rule of law. That was what was starting to happen, up until recent years, under the broken Liberal system we inherited in 2006.

We reformed it. The number of claims from safe countries is down. The number of claims from countries of conflict, where there is real persecution, like Iraq, Syria, and Somalia, is way up. That is allowing us to resettle a record number of refugees.

Our record in this respect is second to none. Canada is standing up for refugees in the best tradition of our humanitarian programs.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Actually, Mr. Speaker, that record pales in comparison to Scandinavian countries, which accept far more refugees, with the same populations.

This is not just a numbers game. It is also mean-spirited. Thanks to Conservative cuts, pregnant women claiming refugee status are going without prenatal care. Desperate parents are waiting so long to get care for their kids that children are ending up in the hospital, and sick people are going without chemotherapy and essential medications. That is the kind of welcome the government is giving to refugees.

Why will the minister not show respect for basic Canadian values and restore appropriate health care for refugees?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the hon. member is completely wrong. The member countries of the European Union resettle almost no refugees. They do have large numbers of asylum claims these days, and we salute some of those countries for accepting asylum seekers from the troubled Middle East and other regions.

However, the member is totally out of line when he says at this late date in the House, contradicting some of his own party colleagues, that refugees in our country are not receiving health care. The reverse is true. They receive the best health care in the world, every one of them. We will continue to stand up for refugees and Canadian taxpayers.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, how can the minister be proud of his health care reform for refugee claimants when the Federal Court ruled that this reform was cruel? The Conservatives would rather spend \$1.4 million of taxpayers' money defending their reform in court than reinstate the health care program. This reform negatively affects the most vulnerable people in Canada, including pregnant women and children.

Why is the minister insisting on moving forward with this cruel reform?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, why does the hon. member not join us in promoting refugee resettlement and supporting our programs to help refugees from Iraq and Syria? Why does she insist on insinuating that refugee claimants who are eligible for Canada's protection do not receive health care? They receive health care, without exception, and we are going to continue to protect their interests, the interests of refugees and the interests of Canadian taxpayers.

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, cuts to the health care of refugee claimants are just one of the minister's many ways to reduce the number of vulnerable people seeking assistance here in Canada. The numbers do not lie. While our international partners are facing unprecedented migration crises, here in Canada we have gone from 40,000 refugee claims per year to about 10,000 claims per year. That is shameful.

How can the minister justify these figures that are so inconsistent with the values of openness that Canadians are so proud of?

● (1455)

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP's position is already known. If we listened to the NDP, we would have given health care to failed refugee claimants, to fraudulent claimants. We would be providing asylum to people from safe countries, such as those in the European Union.

We are not going to do that. We are going to focus on genuine refugees and the truly vulnerable, such as those coming from Iraq, Syria and war-torn countries. That is exactly what we are doing, without any support from the NDP.

[*English*]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, now that the Conservatives have reduced parliamentary committees to a mere rubber stamp for government bills, committees are no longer honouring what they heard from witnesses, as parliamentary secretaries impose the will of the PMO on committee business. What was once the best of Parliament has become a meaningless farce under the Conservatives.

Will the government free parliamentary committees from PMO intimidation by removing parliamentary secretaries and by electing strengthened chairs by secret ballot?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of a Parliament where we have delivered results for Canadians on the things that matter to them: job creation and economic growth. We are ensuring that the security of Canadians remains first and foremost in what we are doing. We are proud of the work that has come from our parliamentary committees in doing this.

As a result, this Parliament will go down in history as one of the most productive in terms of delivering results on new justice bills that are making Canadians more safe and secure. We thank the justice committee and so many other committees that have helped make our legislative track record a success.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government has no respect at all for science. It has muzzled our scientists, especially those who dare speak out about climate change. Our leader made a firm commitment today to allow scientists to speak freely. Canadians pay for federal research and they have a right to know the truth.

Why does this government not understand that our decisions must be guided by science and not ideology? Why does this government not allow our scientists to tell us the truth?

**Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the premise of that question is ridiculous. Our government has made unprecedented investments in science, technology and innovation to create jobs and improve Canadians' quality of life.

We also announced a new open access policy for science that will provide online access to all federally funded research, including research carried out by federal scientists. Canadian federal departments and agencies publish more than 4,000 scientific articles a year, and we are proud of the work that they do.



[English]

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the First Nations Social Development Society provides vital support to B.C. first nations, especially to persons living with disabilities on reserve, but last month, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs made the unilateral decision to eliminate its funding at the end of June. This reckless decision will kill these essential services, and the department has no plan to replace them.

This is a shameful abandonment of some of the most vulnerable people in this country. Will the minister reverse these reckless cuts?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with first nations in B.C. and throughout Canada and continue working with willing partners to achieve better results and better outcomes for first nations throughout the country.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, they are willing partners, and they want to work with the government to help people with disabilities.

Now let us move to the Privacy Commissioner, who found that officials in two government departments wilfully broke privacy laws when they spied on Cindy Blackstock, an indigenous human rights champion. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs told the House, “We shall fully implement the recommendations of the commissioner”, but when Blackstock’s lawyers went to the government officials and asked them to sign a commitment that included that they stop spying on her, they refused.

Why is the minister telling the House and the media one thing but directing his officials to continue, essentially, to spy on Cindy Blackstock?

• (1500)

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is totally ridiculous. No such instructions are given by the minister to bureaucrats or to anybody. This is just fabrication on the part of the hon. member. I would believe and would hope that she could be better than that.

\* \* \*

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the budget implementation act passed its final vote, which included new benefits and tax cuts for veterans and their families.

Could the Minister of Veterans Affairs please give us an update on what our government is doing for veterans and their families?

**Hon. Erin O’Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Pickering—Scarborough East for his support for Bill C-59, which passed this House yesterday.

That bill includes the new retirement income security benefit for veterans over 65, the critical injury benefit, the family caregiver relief benefit, all new benefits to help veterans and their families. This is on top of our expansion of the permanent impairment

### Oral Questions

allowance, reserve force fairness, and the hiring of tactical teams of caseworkers to deploy across the country.

The sad reality is that even though the parliamentary committee fully recommended many of these new benefits, the New Democrats and the Liberals voted against them.

\* \* \*

### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Tina Fontaine was a young teenager. She was murdered and found in the Red River. She was under the NDP foster care system at the time. In April of this year, yet another young girl, left under the Manitoba foster care program once again, was sexually assaulted and beaten almost to death. There is a foster—

**The Speaker:** Order. I am not sure which federal government department is responsible for Manitoba’s foster care system. I did not hear anything in the preamble there.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the air pollution problem in Limoilou is far from being resolved. An access to information request has revealed that the Minister of the Environment did not see fit to verify whether Quebec Stevedoring had to submit a report to the National Pollutant Release Inventory. Nothing was done before 2014, even though this has been a problem since 1979 and has been in the media since 2012.

Can the minister finally tell us whether Quebec Stevedoring will have to report its dust emissions to the National Pollutant Release Inventory?

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the question from the hon. member. I will find out from the Port of Quebec, which is an arm’s-length entity from the Canadian government, whether or not it has some information from its tenant.

\* \* \*

### HEALTH

**Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are now even more marijuana stores in Vancouver than ever before, many located near our schools and community centres and playgrounds. Some have even been caught selling marijuana to children.

Could the Minister of Health please give this House an update on the serious research-based health risks from smoking marijuana?

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is going to continue to stop kids from smoking marijuana, because we know it has very serious and lasting health effects for youth. In fact, the former president of the Canadian Medical Association was clear when he said, “The health risks of smoking marijuana for youth are irrefutable”. He said that marijuana is dangerous for kids. It leads to increased risks of mental health issues, including psychosis and schizophrenia.

While the Liberal leader and the New Democrats support making marijuana use an everyday normal activity and having it available in storefronts like Starbucks, our government will continue to protect young people from marijuana.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government introduced bills this week for the sole purpose of building its election platform. While it is at it, why does the government not introduce bills in response to Quebec's expectations, such as a bill to comply with environmental measures in relation to pipelines, a bill in line with Quebec's expectations as regards foreign workers, or a bill in line with Quebec's expectations as regards firearms?

As long as it is using public funds, it should be using them to further Quebec's interests as well.

• (1505)

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our agenda that we have delivered on, and also of the agenda that we are laying out. The work of this government continues and includes important bills, including on gun crime.

We have a bill that has been introduced by my colleague, the Minister of Justice, that would deal with the question of mandatory sentences for possession of illegal handguns, a response to the court decision but a critical piece of legislation to respond to.

It is the right thing to do to tell Canadians how we are going to make them safe and how we are going to combat gun crime. That is important for the people of Quebec and the people of Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons said so himself: the only reason they are introducing so many bills these days is to win votes.

Having touched on numerous subjects, the government is nevertheless avoiding the subject of medical aid in dying even though there has been consensus on this issue in Quebec since the end-of-life care act was passed a year ago.

The Minister of Justice promised that a consultation process would be launched by the end of the session, which we know is just a few days away.

Will he keep his promise?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we intended to launch a consultation process in Canada. We made that promise.

[English]

This is a very important issue, an issue that touches lives in communities across this great country. We intend to have a very inclusive consultation. We expect to say more about this in the very near future.

I thank the hon. member for his interest in this important issue.

---

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

• (1510)

[English]

**ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BARBARIC CULTURAL PRACTICES ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that 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, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with the passage of Bill S-7, Canada would join the growing list of like-minded countries criminalizing forced marriage.

Moreover, the proposed maximum sentence of imprisonment of five years lies within the average range of penalties of the countries I outlined just prior to question period. Some have claimed that these offences have no impact because there have been few convictions. I completely disagree, and for several reasons.

First, as the RCMP pointed out in their written submission to the citizenship and immigration committee, criminal law is not only about punishing violations of agreed-upon social codes of conduct, but it also serves to clearly establish the limits of acceptable social conduct. The criminalization of forced marriage has a symbolic function. It sends out a public message that forced marriage is socially unacceptable.

Second, a specific criminal offence of forced marriage can empower victims by allowing them to clearly articulate that it is a crime to force them to marry against their will. In fact, this very point was raised in the testimony of Lee Marsh, one of the committee's witnesses and a victim of a forced marriage who indicated that if she had known forced marriage was against the law, she might have been able to refuse the marriage.

*Government Orders*

Third, enhancing victims' awareness of their rights can lead to an increase in reporting, both to the police and to victim service agencies. For example, a Copenhagen-based organization reported a surge in victims coming forward to seek help after Denmark criminalized forced marriage. The threat of criminal sanction coupled with awareness-raising and prevention measures, can help reduce these practices rather than drive them underground, as some would claim.

Fourth, forced marriage constitutes a distinct violation of the human rights of the victim that is of sufficient gravity that it should be considered as a crime separate from existing criminal offences. The proposed new offence in Bill S-7 focuses on the point where the harm of forcing someone into an unwanted marriage crystalizes, namely the marriage ceremony itself. It addresses the unique harm associated with community endorsement of the creation of an unwanted legal bond within which sexual assaults are expected to occur. This new offence is also required because forced marriage is not a subcategory of existing general offences.

Fifth, a specific criminal offence will permit victims and the authorities to prevent the forced marriage ceremony from taking place by using the preventive aspect of the criminal law. Bill S-7 is structured precisely so that victims can benefit from the specific forced and underage peace bonds to prevent the ceremony from taking place. Moreover, Bill S-7 provides law enforcement with the tools to stop the removal of a child from Canada for the purposes of a forced or underage marriage abroad.

Finally, the criminalization of forced marriage serves to dissuade and deter people from violating the fundamental rights of the victim. As many families who force their children into unwanted marriages may otherwise be law-abiding, the very existence of these specific offences may be sufficient to dissuade them from proceeding with the forced or underage marriage ceremony.

I would like to end my speech today by saying a few words about the proposed amendments to the defence of provocation in the Criminal Code. The defence of provocation applies only in cases where murder is actually proven. If successful, it results in a verdict of manslaughter, which has no mandatory minimum sentence, instead of murder, which carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison and strict parole ineligibility rules.

Currently, the defence will be successful where the murder was committed in response to a wrongful act or insult from the victim that would be sufficient to deprive an ordinary person of the power of self-control, and where the accused acted suddenly before there was time for his passion to cool.

Provocation can be established even where the victim's conduct was perfectly legal or lawful. The defence is, in fact, raised in cases of spousal homicide against women where the alleged provocation was lawful conduct such as leaving a relationship or insulting the perpetrator's virility.

● (1515)

Historically, the provocation defence was the original honour defence in our common law tradition. It was limited to certain categories of conduct related to a man defending his honour, such as when finding another man committing adultery with his wife, which

was viewed as the highest invasion of property. The defence was correctly criticized for decades for excusing male violence against women on the basis of outdated notions that have no place in contemporary Canadian society.

The proposed amendment in Bill S-7 would limit provocation so that it could only be raised where the alleged provoking conduct by the victim would amount to an offence punishable by five years in prison, or more.

In my view, it is entirely appropriate that Canada amend a defence that originates from a time when women were legal property of their husbands and when defence gave men latitude to kill in response to conduct that insulted their personal sense of honour.

Our Conservative government is taking steps to strengthen our laws to help ensure that no young girl or woman in Canada becomes a victim of early or forced marriage, polygamy, so-called honour-based violence, or any other form of harmful cultural practice.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill and align Canada with like-minded countries that are grappling with similar forms of violence against women and girls.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

As is now Conservative tradition, every NDP amendment, and there were only two in this case, were defeated during consideration of the bill by the committee in question. We have very serious concerns about the bill, including the fact that the unfortunate victims of forced or polygamous marriages could be deported from Canada and be victimized yet again. That is one of the unintended consequences of this bill.

I would like to know whether my colleague is open to considering amendments to prevent the deportation of women who unfortunately were victimized by their particular situation.

[*English*]

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Mr. Speaker, there are two parts to my response to the member's question.

The first is that this seems to be a typical approach that we see from both the NDP and the Liberal Party in this House of Commons, in this Parliament, to claim they support the intent of a piece of legislation, then propose a number of amendments that would obviously change the legislation, and then claim that they cannot support the legislation because their amendments were not accepted. Frankly, we know their intention all along was to simply not support the legislation.

It is really shameful that the NDP does not want to, for whatever the reasons might be, support the principle of protecting women and girls from the practice of the early and forced marriages, as I discussed in my speech, or other types of violent behaviours, honour killings, and these kinds of measures.

*Points of Order*

The other part I want to quickly address, in response to the member, is that one of the intentions that would occur from this piece of legislation is the idea of being able to prevent these kinds of things from happening in the first place, that preventive effect of a Criminal Code offence.

I certainly hope the NDP would have another look at this and determine that it should be trying to protect women and girls from these kinds of instances.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I am obviously not satisfied with my colleague's answer.

It is rather disturbing to see him impugning our motives instead of being open to a dialogue to protect victims. The phenomenon exists. And yet, instead of preventing injustice, the government insists on entrenching it, which is a problem. Furthermore, and let us not kid ourselves, the bill's approach reeks of racism, which quite frankly is very troubling.

I would like to know how the government is going to manage deporting unfortunate victims of situations that are unacceptable in our society.

• (1520)

[*English*]

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Mr. Speaker, the member claims to have a desire to be open to ideas that would protect women and girls from these kinds of practices, things like early and forced marriages, polygamy, and so-called honour killings. If he and his party are really and truly open to ideas that would protect women and girls from these kinds of barbaric practices, then what I would suggest he do and what I would suggest his colleagues do is to stand up and support this piece of legislation because it would do exactly that. It seeks to protect women and girls from these kinds of barbaric practices and set the tone that those things are unacceptable in Canada. It would help to prevent these practices and ensure we protect women and girls in Canada from them.

I certainly hope that the member and his party would choose to have another good look at the bill and stand up in favour of protection of women and girls from these kinds of barbaric practices in this country.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, reflecting on what took place earlier today in question period. I seek the advice and guidance of the Chair regarding the question that was put forward.

When we come up with a question, all members are very much aware that we have 30 seconds in which to express the question. When we pose the question, there is often a significant preamble to it.

The Speaker knew that I might have been 10 or 15 seconds into the question, so I was not sure why he was standing up. I had to sit down, and I was a bit surprised by the Speaker determining that the

topic of the question might not have been the federal government's responsibility.

I can appreciate that the Speaker will be able to review the *Hansard*, but I thought that this information might assist him in providing a comment on the question that I posed. As I am sure the Speaker is aware, foster care is in a very serious situation. The wording that I chose to use in my preamble about it being a crisis situation is the way it is being labelled in the province of Manitoba today. We are talking about how indigenous people of first nations and aboriginal heritage make up in excess of 90% of the more than 10,000 children who are in foster care. That is then a crisis situation.

My question, which I was not afforded the opportunity to ask, was related to the importance of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development indicating to the House what the Government of Canada is doing about the crisis situation, given that we are talking about around 90% of children in foster care having a first nations or aboriginal background. That is the federal government's responsibility.

I was 10 or 15 seconds into the question, and I suspect there was quite a bit of heckling on the other side. In fairness to the Speaker, perhaps he did not hear all of the comments. I appreciate that he is looking into it, but I am looking for his guidance and some sort of indication as to what I did wrong. Had I been able to finish the question, I would have made reference to the 10,000-plus children, of which 90% have a first nations background. It is very similar to the question I asked yesterday, so I would ask the Speaker to take the point of order as notice so that he can reflect on it.

He indicated to me earlier that he would review what was said, so this is just more add-on information in the hope that we will get some sort of clarification.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will just answer that briefly. From what I heard of the question, the member was asking about the foster care system in Manitoba and then he started speaking about the incompetence of the provincial New Democratic government in Manitoba.

I do not want to reflect on whether that might or might not be accurate. I would not go there, but I think that was what provoked a response from the other side here. I think that was the cue to the Speaker, in his defence, that the question that was being asked was about the provincial government, since it sounded as if the member was asking about its incompetence.

If the member wishes to ask questions about federal administration, he should be clearer about it.

• (1525)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank both members for their interventions. I am sure that the Chair will take this under advisement and respond with a ruling, if necessary, in a very short period of time.

### ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BARBARIC CULTURAL PRACTICES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that 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, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for LaSalle—Émard.

It is always an honour to rise in the House on behalf of my constituents of Surrey North to express my opposition to 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, or as the Conservatives have titled the bill, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act.

Right from the start, with the title of the bill, it is evident that the intent of the legislation is only political. I have heard the concerns of many witnesses who have told us some of the measures were useless and would actually further marginalize victims. Following advice from these expert stakeholders, it is my obligation to stand firmly against Bill S-7.

First, most of the measures in the bill do not actually achieve anything at all. They only duplicate existing laws, and the few measures that Bill S-7 does introduce could actually have negative consequences that defeat the very purpose it claims to have, which is to protect women.

Violence against women and children is unacceptable. Much work needs to be done in Canada to prevent and combat these crimes. However, we have to listen to the recommendations of experts, stakeholders, and victims, who are on the ground dealing with these situations on a daily basis and are familiar with our Criminal Code and immigration act, for an appropriate response that offers an actual solution to this very serious problem.

We listened to many witnesses express their concerns with the purpose of the bill and state that it would in fact worsen problems for women. However, Conservatives are not listening.

Lawyer Deepa Mattoo, from the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario stated:

Bill S-7 lacks the understanding of the complex issues of violence faced by women and children and does not achieve the goal that the government desires to achieve with this.

Dr. Naila Butt, from the Social Services Network also stated that:

Criminalization of forced marriage, without the much needed institutional support for victims, would only further alienate and harm those facing forced marriage and gender-based violence, with the added insult of being stigmatized that they come from barbaric cultures.

These are individuals who work at the ground level. They are familiar with what is going on in the community; they are the very stakeholders, the ones who work with the victims. Conservatives are once again ignoring the opinion of experts, stakeholders, and victims in order to benefit their political agenda.

I have said this before and I will say it again. If the Conservatives really want to tackle the issue of violence against women, how about they finally launch an inquiry into Canada's missing and murdered indigenous women? As of 2010, there have been 1,200 known cases

### Government Orders

of missing or murdered indigenous women in Canada. The statistics are absolutely shocking, yet the Prime Minister actually stated that this issue, and I quote him, "... it isn't really high on our radar...". That is shameful.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs did not even have the decency to stand up during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. The government has literally failed to stand up for women's rights.

Conservatives like to pretend and brag they are tough on crime, but they are continuing to fail to protect Canadians by introducing political bills that offer empty solutions and are only put in place to benefit the Conservative agenda, like this bill. I know when the Conservatives pretend to be tough on crime. I know when they brag about being tough on crime.

• (1530)

There have been 30 shootings in my riding over the last number of months. That shows that whatever they have been doing for the last 10 years is not working in my community. We have been asking for police officers over a number of months, but the Conservatives cannot come up with concrete plans to even bring them into our city.

Violence against women remains a systematic, widespread issue in Canada. It is appalling but unfortunately not surprising that the Conservatives would want to politicize such a serious issue as gender-based violence.

We in Surrey are familiar with the current government's political tactics. The Conservatives like to sensationalize issues, but then they fail to provide any real solutions. For example, they have been saying that they will fix the crime problem in my community since they formed government. However, we have yet to see any real commitments or concrete solutions for my city. We see a lot of talk coming from these guys, but no action. It is clear that the current government is not committed to lowering crime in my community, just as it is not committed to tackling forced and underage marriages.

It is obvious that its intentions are not to combat gender-based violence. It will not even listen to the experts when it comes to something as effortless as changing the short title of this bill. The title of this bill, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act, was of major concern to many of the witnesses we heard from at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, since it invokes racist stereotypes and further marginalizes minority groups. The title insinuates that all cultural practices are barbaric and reinforces prejudice against certain cultural groups by targeting racial minorities for practices that are in fact found in Canadian society at large and not only in these communities.

We put forth amendments to change not only the short title but also other aspects of the bill. However, all of our proposed amendments were rejected by the Conservative majority. A shock factor name will not help combat violence against women. Instead it sensationalizes the issue, and, as some witnesses suggested, it could force perpetrators to further isolate potential victims from resources.

*Government Orders*

As we were told at committee, this bill could also have serious unintended consequences that should not be ignored. For example, UNICEF expressed concerns that the bill would impose criminal sanctions against minors who attend, celebrate, or help organize a forced marriage, effectively impacting their future with a criminal record. This bill would re-victimize women and children who are at risk of violence by imposing criminal sanctions on them rather than protecting them from predators. The penalties would include criminalization and deportation, so some women and children would not want to come forward to report forced marriages.

If the Conservatives really have the interests of victims at heart, they would listen to the experts, the stakeholders, and the victims. They would conduct proper consultations before adopting measures that might harm the very people they are claiming to protect.

Canada needs a national plan to end violence against women and to protect women within our immigration system. However, the intention of this bill is only political. Its intent is not to protect women. Bill S-7 is yet another example of the current government's abuse of power to make useless pieces of legislation that only sensationalize an issue and discriminate against a part of the population in order to further its political agenda.

When will the government start listening to Canadians and come out with legislation that actually addresses Canadian issues? I will answer that question. The Conservatives will not have time to do that. They have had 10 years, and Canadians have had enough. They are tired.

We will have a new government on October 19 of this year. The NDP government will clean up a lot of the messes that the current government has made over the last 10 years. We will ensure that we come up with plans to protect our women and children. The Conservatives have failed to do that over the past 10 years, and it is time for them to go.

● (1535)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate a number of the comments made by the member. He mentioned the issue of the title of the bill. Liberals have talked a great deal about that title, which we suspect came right from the Prime Minister's Office.

The question I have for the member is fairly specific. There are aspects of the legislation, for example, that say there will be a minimum national age now for young women to be able to get married. Is there any aspect of the legislation that the NDP actually supports, or does the NDP believe all aspects of the legislation are wrong?

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, that is typical of the Liberals. They will say one thing and do another. On Bill C-51, they said they were for it although they were against it, but they were actually going to vote against it. It is the same thing with this bill. They were against it although they were for some of the things in it, but they are going to vote with the government. That party cannot take a stand.

Now that they are trailing in the polls, Liberals are trying to adopt some of the very policies that the NDP has offered over the last four or five years. Canadians realize that this is too little, too late for the little party over in the corner.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech, because I think he really set the record straight.

If we are serious about wanting to tackle violence against women, we need to be wiser in our approach. The bill tackles some types of violence against women in ways that are not at all wise.

Many of the practices that have been denounced are already covered by the Criminal Code. In reality, this bill is meant to target and divide Canadians on an extremely serious issue: violence against women.

I would like my colleague to comment on that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, violence against women and children is a very serious issue that we need to address nationally. We need to address it in discussions with the provinces, the cities, and the communities. It is not something we can ignore.

There are 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women. We have been calling on the government to have an inquiry to find out what happened, yet it has refused to do that.

Twelve hundred women have gone missing or been murdered, but it is clear that the government has no agenda when it comes to protecting women and children. It is more interested in partisan politics and trying to score some cheap points to get re-elected. That is not going to happen. I can assure everyone that Canadians have seen the Conservatives work over the past years. They have failed to deliver. Men, women, and children have been victimized over and over, yet the government has failed to protect those very same individuals.

● (1540)

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, an actual victim of early and forced marriage had this to say about the bill:

Forced into an abusive marriage at 17 and unable to leave it for 18 years, I can attest to the fact that a forced marriage is effectively a life of slavery. I congratulate the Canadian government for taking a bold step on behalf of women who have nowhere to turn for help.

This was said by Aruna Papp, a woman I had the great honour of meeting. She was a victim of this barbaric practice of forced marriage and commends this government for taking action. I am wondering if the hon. member opposite has a comment to make on Aruna Papp's statement.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, we should always support victims of such heinous crimes as forced marriages.

The problem is that the bill does not address the very issues my hon. colleagues have talked about. The bill does not address very the issues that need to be addressed. Witnesses came forward, expert witnesses and stakeholders, who are part of the community and worked in the community, yet the Conservatives failed to accept even one amendment to this bill. Even the Canadian Bar Association called this bill basically useless.

*Government Orders*

We need some concrete plans to address situations like those my hon. colleague talked about. Conservatives have failed to deliver for people who are forced into marriages, and this bill is not the solution.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. H el ene LeBlanc (LaSalle— mard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great indignation that I rise today to debate 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, which, I would remind the House, came from the Senate.

I refuse to use the short title the Conservatives gave this bill, which they have used repeatedly at multiple press conferences, as well as in quotations from many cabinet ministers, because, frankly, the short title is racist and discriminatory.

[*English*]

Ms. Alia Hogben, executive director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, in testimony to the status of women committee, stated:

It is dehumanizing and degrading to label certain forms of violence as barbaric when all of it is so. Why are some politicians labelling some practices as barbaric and linking it with immigrants only?

[*Translation*]

Let us look at the intentions of Bill S-7: it makes polygamy grounds for inadmissibility to Canada; it sets the minimum age for marriage at 16; it restricts the defence of provocation to indictable offences; and it creates new offences and a recognizance to keep the peace related to forced or underage marriage.

I will show not only that Bill S-7 is largely unnecessary, but also that some of its provisions will have negative consequences for victims.

First, polygamy is prohibited under the Criminal Code and has been illegal in Canada since 1890. Polygamy is not a recognized form of marriage for people wishing to immigrate to Canada.

According to the Library of Parliament's legislative summary, there appear to be no statistics as to how often immigration—despite these prohibitions—is used to facilitate the reunion of polygamous families in Canada.

What is more, there is no empirical evidence on the extent to which immigrants from countries where polygamy is legal or culturally accepted have formed polygamous families in Canada.

Professor Rupaleem Bhuyan, from the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto, adds that Bill S-7 could have negative consequences for the victims of polygamy and their family. He said:

● (1545)

[*English*]

I am most concerned with how this bill increases discretionary powers among immigration officers to deem inadmissible anyone who is perceived to be practising polygamy. The low burden of proof may lead to racist discrimination against immigrants from particular regions of the world who are considered undesirable. This provision would also put women who are spouses of polygamous men at risk of being deported or being separated from their children.

[*Translation*]

We need to recognize from the outset that forced marriage is a form of violence and that these types of marriages are wrong. The requirements of free and informed consent are already included in the Quebec Civil Code and common law.

The Canadian Criminal Code already provides adequate recourse in cases of forced marriage before and after the marriage, as well as in cases of travelling with a minor with the intention of forcing that minor to marry.

Bill S-7 adds nothing but provisions that could create many undesirable consequences, such as increased social pressure on the victims and added danger for the victims by isolating them and removing their ability to speak out for fear of reprisal.

Naila Butt, of the Social Services Network, summarized the situation this way, and I quote:

Criminalization of forced marriage, without the much needed institutional support for victims, would only further alienate and harm those facing forced marriage and gender-based violence, with the added insult of being stigmatized that they come from barbaric cultures.

Members of a responsible government must base their laws on evidence, which is not the case with this bill. They must first consult stakeholders, civil society, victims and victim advocacy groups. It is their duty to consult on the best way to approach a problem in order to find the right solution that will achieve the intended result. That is obviously not what happened here.

A bill must absolutely be useful and not have a negative impact on the victims, in other words, it must not make them more vulnerable and must not further victimize them, which is unfortunately not the case here. Bill S-7 is ill conceived and remarkably does not meet any of the criteria for good evidence-based legislation and the search for appropriate solutions to a problem. It speaks only to the Conservative government's ideology.

Even after it was studied in committee, Canada's Minister of Citizenship and Immigration immediately declared that he would not consider any amendments to the bill. Even though the vast majority of witnesses expressed serious concerns about this legislation, no amendments were retained. One witness who appeared before this committee said that Bill S-7 was the wrong way to address these problems. I completely agree, and that is why I am vehemently opposed to this bill. I do, however, support the NDP's motion, which shows how a responsible New Democrat government would address violence against women. This motion also reflects the wishes of many agencies that work tirelessly to combat violence against women with very little support from the current government. The motion states:

*Government Orders*

That, in the opinion of the House, forced marriages are a crime that constitutes violence against women and consequently, the government should: (a) strongly condemn the practice; (b) increase funding to organizations working with potential or actual victims; (c) consult with women, communities, organizations, and experts to form a true picture of the issue and to identify the best ways to address it; (d) allow women with conditional permanent resident status to remain in Canada if their partners are deported due to polygamy or forced marriage; (e) invest in information programs tailored to immigrant women; (f) develop culturally appropriate training programs for service providers dealing with immigrant women such as the police and social workers, as well as officers of the Canada Border Service Agency and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration; (g) restore funding to Status of Women Canada; and (h) implement the NDP's national plan for a strategy to address violence against women.

That is how an NDP government would tackle the problem of violence against women. We will finally implement well-thought-out, long-term solutions in concert with the organizations that are working to eliminate this scourge.

• (1550)

**Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that strikes me. I have children, teenaged girls, and I think it is a terrible thing to force a girl to marry. That is often done because of a different culture and different vision of marriage. The victims then choose not to report their forced marriage, out of fear that their parents will be deported for facilitating it.

There is therefore a problem in this bill. We have to help these girls, but how can we educate the parents and change their way of thinking so that this kind of thing no longer happens? In Denmark, a similar bill was enacted and no crimes were reported. That means that the girls feel so guilty about accusing their parents that they do not report anything and they continue to live with the abuse.

Something was not done right there. I would like my colleague to talk about this in more detail. Yes, we have to put an end to forced marriages, but how can we help girls to speak up without being afraid that their families will be deported?

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments.

In fact, we do not need to keep reinventing the wheel. There are front-line workers who work with the groups in question and have already started to look for solutions. However, legislators are not listening to those groups. There has been no consultation.

As my colleague demonstrated so well, violence against women is often committed by intimate partners or family members. It is therefore very difficult to report them. There needs to be a support group in order to prevent this type of violence. We have to encourage intervention and prevention and designate a safe place where these people can take refuge and explain their situations, so that together, we can find well-thought-out solutions.

However, we have to invest in these organizations in order to help them. They are already working very closely with people who might become victims. We have to do prevention work in a conciliatory manner.

[*English*]

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the previous question, when my colleague from the NDP asked if we would be forcing parents to be deported, et cetera. I want to clarify something on that.

There is a measure in this bill that where there are reasonable grounds to believe a person will specifically aid or participate in the forced or early marriage ceremony involving someone else, for example, a child, or will take a young person out of Canada for the purpose of a forced or early marriage ceremony abroad, that individual could be brought to the court and ordered to enter into a peace bond. That provision is there.

Therefore, to fearmonger, saying that the parents will be deported, is not the right approach.

Coming back to that, my colleague talked about some representation from Muslims Facing Tomorrow appearing before the status of women committee. Let me this share with her. On May 5, Raheel Raza from Muslims Facing Tomorrow said, in our immigration committee, of which I am a member:

The fact that the bill uses the word “barbaric” is extremely important because the abuse that is perpetuated against women under the banner of honour-based violence is nothing less than barbaric. Therefore, my organization totally supports the bill in its intent to eradicate barbaric practices.

I would like to hear from my colleague on that.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc:** Mr. Speaker, what the quotation says is that all violence against women is serious and barbaric. Nowhere does it say that we must target particular communities in the short title of a bill. That is totally racist and discriminatory.

All violence against women must be excluded from our modern societies; that is not the issue. It is the use of a title that targets communities and divides Canada that is problematic. We must absolutely address the issue of violence against women, whatever it may be.

[*English*]

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. Before I do that, I would like to inform the House that I will be splitting my time with the member for Mississauga South.

The amendments contained in Bill S-7 would improve protection and support for individuals at risk, especially women and girls, including in the following ways: establishing a new national minimum age for marriage at 16 years; codifying the existing legal requirement for free and enlightened consent for marriage; codifying the requirement of ending an existing marriage prior to entering a new one; criminalizing certain conduct related to underage and forced marriage ceremonies, including the act of removing the child from Canada for the purpose of such marriage ceremonies; creating specific preventive court ordered peace bond when there are grounds to fear that someone is at risk of underage or forced marriage; and ensuring that the defence of provocation would not apply in so-called honour killings and many spousal homicides.

In my speech today I would like to focus on the measures in Bill S-7, which would require a minimum age for marriage, free and informed consent to marry and dissolution of prior marriages before new marriages.



*Government Orders*

I will start by highlighting the fact that there is currently no national minimum age for marriage in Canada. We therefore need to modernize and clarify marriage legislation applicable across Canada.

This area of law is very confusing to many people because they assume that a minimum age for marriage already exists.

Setting the absolute minimum age for marriage is a matter of federal jurisdiction, however, there is currently only one piece of federal legislation with a minimum marriage age and it only applies in Quebec. The Federal Law—Civil Law Harmonization Act, No. 1, which reconciles Quebec's unique civil law at the provincial level with common law at the federal level, sets age 16 as the minimum age for marriage in Quebec.

For the other common law provinces, the case law is extremely old in this regard, which causes some confusion. In general, the common law is interpreted as age 14 for boys and age 12 for girls.

Setting a national minimum age of 16 years old for marriage would establish a consistent standard across the country and would make it clear that Canada would not permit underage marriage.

I would also like to clarify that the national absolute minimum age for marriage is a separate legal concept from the provincial jurisdiction to legislate on minimum age pertaining to the conditions of celebration of a marriage. Existing territorial and provincial marriage law will continue to contain protections for children between the new minimum age for marriage and the age of majority, usually set by the province or territory at age 18 or 19.

In the exceptional circumstances in which a child under the age of majority is mature enough to marry, these provincial and territorial laws currently require parental consent, and in some instances also the consent of a judge, to ensure that the child fully understands the legal consequences of marriage.

Bill S-7 also proposes to amend the Civil Marriage Act to codify the requirement of free and enlightened consent to marry and codifying the requirement for the dissolution of any previous marriage.

At the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, we had the opportunity to hear from numerous witnesses. Lawyer Kathryn Marshall explained why it was important that we codify the national minimum age. She told the committee that the common law was very open to interpretation and that our government was taking an important step by codifying the legal requirements. We also heard from a lot of witnesses.

● (1600)

The committee had the opportunity to listen to victims of such marriages, victims like Aruna Papp, whose name has already been mentioned in previous comments and speeches. She said:

I commend the government for its leadership in taking a stand on a very difficult issue and for defending the human rights of vulnerable women who are unable to speak for themselves. I'm thrilled to support this bill.

There are numerous others. We talked with lawyer Kathryn Marshall on April 23. She said:

With the passage of this bill, Canada will be joining other nations that have taken a strong stance against forced and child marriage by making it illegal. It is important this law include criminal consequences for people who organize, participate in,

pressure, and facilitate child marriage and marriage without consent. It is often the pressure from family and community that is forcing these young women and girls to engage in these marriages.

I have been a member of the committee for some time. I mentioned the peace bond in my previous comment to a question asked by my colleague from the NDP. The legal requirement that any previous marriage must be dissolved prior to a new marriage would now apply nationally to all Canadian residents. Also, family members and others would be subject to prosecution where they actively and knowingly participate in a forced or early marriage ceremony by transporting unwilling or underage daughters to the ceremony or acting as a legal witness. A person who knowingly performs a forced marriage or early marriage ceremony, would also be subject to prosecution.

Our government is taking strong steps to ensure no young woman or girl is a victim of early or forced marriage. I heard a couple of previous speakers from the NDP. There was a lot of misinformation. I honestly wish that on sensitive issues like this, we would all work together, instead of making out that government bills are all part of the Conservative agenda, but even if it is part of the Conservative agenda, what is wrong with getting a good agenda out and helping Canadians?

I urge all my colleagues from all parties to please support the bill. Let us protect those who need protection.

● (1605)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his speech. I also want to clarify that, in fact, I support establishing the minimum age for marriage at 16, as well as criminal sanctions against those who perform a marriage ceremony in the case of early forced marriages.

To illustrate the problem I have with what the Conservative member just said, I will use the example of a 14-year-old girl who is the victim of a forced marriage. Under the Conservative bill, she would have to report her family, her father, her mother, her brothers and sisters. How can a 14-year-old girl be expected to do that, knowing that her entire family will be convicted? It makes no sense. That young girl would not be able to do that. What will happen, then? Forced marriages will happen in secret. If we are saying that forced marriages are illegal, let us make sure that those who perform those marriages are punished.

I would like to hear my colleague comment on the unfortunate consequences this bill will have for victims.

[*English*]

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** Mr. Speaker, our government's intention is to make sure that young people and children, women and girls in this case, are educated about there being clear laws and protections. There is no intention to separate the parents and the children here.

The zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act would send a very clear message to those coming to Canada that forced marriages, honour-based violence, or any other form of harm through cultural practices are unacceptable in Canada.

*Government Orders*

Let me share what another victim said at committee. Lee Marsh was a victim of underage forced marriage, so she has experience with this. I commend her bravery for coming out in public to share what she went through. On April 23, she said:

If I had known that what my mother was doing was against the law, I might have felt more able to say no. It would have given me an out to say, "But you can't do this. It's against the law."

That is why it is very important that a law is in place, so that young people are aware of it and they can stand up and tell their own parents or other relatives that it is against the law and they should not do it.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are quite supportive of some things in the legislation. The member made reference to establishing the national minimum age at 16. However, here we are, 10 years later, and now the government has brought forward a piece of legislation to deal with this. I cannot help but reflect on other aspects that it would have been nice to see the government put a priority on. If this was such a priority, I am sure it could have been a priority four, five, or six years ago. It is only today that we are seeing the legislation being brought forward and the government is trying to push it through by using time allocation.

Would the member not agree that there are many other issues within immigration? Especially if we want to relate it to marriages, imagine a federal government that continues to keep families apart because of its ever growing delays overseas when it comes to immigration.

I wonder if the member might want to provide some comment with regard to that as a priority versus this.

• (1610)

**Mr. Devinder Shory:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know where to start. The 13 dark lost years of the Liberal regime created a mess in immigration. There were backlogs.

Of course, there is plenty of legislation that is very important. We have to deal with all of it, and we are still dealing with it, and we intend to deal with a lot more.

In those 13 years, as I said, immigration was made so messy that there was a backlog of more than 800,000 people.

When my colleague talks about family reunification, I would ask him to do some research. This is the government that broke the record of the last 50 years to bring the maximum number of immigrants in one year. This is the government that introduced the super visa for parents and grandparents. This visa is issued for 10 years to parents and grandparents and they can stay here for longer periods. They can come and go back, and come and go back.

That is what the government has done. I agree with the member that there is a lot of work to be done, and a lot more will be done.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak in support of Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act.

In October 2013, our government committed to ensuring that early and forced marriage does not take place on Canadian soil. Bill S-7 delivers on that promise. This bill proposes to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act

and the Criminal Code in order to enhance the existing protections against harmful and violent practices that are perpetrated primarily against women and girls. I would like to take this opportunity to situate this bill in the context of the many substantive measures that this government has taken to address violence against women and girls in Canada.

As Canada's Minister of Citizenship and Immigration explained before the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, all violent acts committed against women and girls are unacceptable in our democratic Canada. Our government has taken and continues to take action to address various forms of violence against women and girls. Bill S-7 supplements Canada's robust responses to violence against women and girls by addressing some areas where gaps have been identified, such as the response to early and forced marriage, and strengthens the legislative tools in relation to other forms of gender-based violence, such as polygamy and so-called honour killings, as well as spousal homicides. This bill addresses certain forms of violence against women and girls that reflect antiquated notions of women as property or as mere vessels of family honour and reputation. These notions are clearly inconsistent with fundamental Canadian values of equality between men and women.

The zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act introduces important legislative measures that would protect potential and actual victims of early and forced marriage. Bill S-7 proposes to set the absolute minimum age of marriage at 16 in the Civil Marriage Act, and to codify in that same act the requirements that a marriage involve free and enlightened consent and that all previous marriages be dissolved prior to entering into a new marriage. This bill also introduces changes to the Criminal Code to criminalize active participation in an underage or forced marriage and to criminalize removing a child from Canada for these same harmful purposes.

Moreover, Bill S-7 expands the peace bond regime in the Criminal Code to provide for a new court order designed to prevent an underage or forced marriage from taking place in Canada, or to prevent a child from being taken out of the country to be forced into a marriage. In addition, Bill S-7 proposes to limit the defence of provocation, as we have heard a number of times this afternoon, in the Criminal Code so it could not be raised in cases involving so-called honour killings and in many spousal homicides where the alleged provocation often consists of verbal or offensive but otherwise lawful behaviour.

Finally, this bill puts forward important changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that would specify that a permanent resident or foreign national is inadmissible if he or she practises polygamy in Canada.

*Government Orders*

I would like to take a few moments to point out how the proposed amendments in this bill would align Canada with many like-minded countries around the world.

First, in relation to early marriage, Bill S-7 introduces a minimum age of 16 below which marriages could no longer be legally conducted in Canada even with parental or court consent. There has been some misunderstanding about this provision of the bill, so let me be perfectly clear. The free age of marriage in Canada, or the age at which a child becomes an adult and can give consent to marry on his or her own with no additional requirements, is 18 or 19 years of age, depending on the province or territory where the marriage takes place. Bill S-7 does not change this. Instead, Bill S-7 proposes to legislate in relation to the absolute minimum age of legal capacity for marriage, which is a matter of federal jurisdiction under the Constitution. Currently, federal law sets age 16 as the lowest age for marriage only in the province of Quebec. Elsewhere in Canada, as there is no federal legislation, the old pre-Confederation common law applies. This bill proposes to close that loophole and set a national floor at 16, below which marriages may not be legally conducted.

•(1615)

If we compare Canada with similarly situated countries, we see that many have set the lowest age for anyone to marry at age 16, including the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, Austria, Finland, Germany, Italy, and Norway. This is what Bill S-7 proposes to do.

Several other like-minded countries have set 18 as the age at which a person can marry without the requirement for consent from their parents or the courts. These countries have no absolute minimum age of marriage: Belgium, France, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and most of the United States. This is similar to the current law in Canada.

It is important to point out that many countries cited as setting the minimum age for marriage at age 18 actually have a similar legal structure to that of Canada. They set age 18 as the free age, or the age of majority, meaning that a person can marry without any other person's consent.

This is subject to a number of exceptions where a person below the age of 18 can marry with some form of additional consent or approval, and so it does not represent the absolute minimum age. In fact, very few countries have set their lowest age for anyone to marry at age 18. Switzerland is the only similarly situated country that we are aware of to have done so.

Bill S-7 addresses certain gaps in the range of existing measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls in Canada. Our Conservative government is taking steps to strengthen our laws and to help ensure that no young woman or girl in Canada becomes a victim of early or forced marriage, polygamy, so-called honour-based violence, or any other form of harmful cultural practice.

I would be pleased to take any questions about any of these other important aspects of the bill as well.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and align Canada with like-minded countries that are grappling with similar forms of violence against women and girls.

As a former member of the parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I am just so proud to be able to support this very important bill. It would affect many hundreds of young girls going forward. These girls live in Canada and perhaps might have backgrounds different from my daughter's and her experiences growing up, but I think we have a responsibility to protect them from violence and barbaric cultural practices.

•(1620)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her presentation.

For those who might be looking at the bill for the first time or those who might be observing us from home, the difficulty with the bill is that much of it, in fact 95% of what is in the bill, deals with matters that are already illegal. Canada has never allowed honour killings, because we have never allowed killings. They go in the general category of murder. Similarly, polygamy is already illegal in Canada, and to my knowledge, people who interview refugees coming to Canada would not allow people to come in if they were in a polygamous union in any case. However, my concern is where the bill goes beyond being merely useless and propaganda, where it might actually do some damage.

Members of the criminal bar who testified before the committee testified that there is no example in Canadian history where the defence of provocation has been used in a case such as an honour killing. Provocation by its very nature in law requires a response that is essentially on the spur of the moment, where passions are riled up. For example, if one sees a person who committed violence against one's wife, on the street, unexpectedly, the defence of provocation can move what would have been murder to manslaughter.

In an honour killing situation, provocation does not fit at all and could never be used. However, the change to the defence of provocation in the proposed act, according to the advice from the former head of the criminal bar within the Canadian Bar Association, is that this could do damage to criminal justice in Canada.

I ask my hon. colleague, who is also an hon. friend, if she is not concerned that the bill, which is generally dealing with things that are already illegal, may actually make it so that the defence of provocation for people in genuine instances of being provoked lose access to that defence in Canadian law.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the hon. member's question about provocation. While it may be true that it is not a defence that has been used, we would be codifying that the defence of provocation has to be substantive. For example, one could not use as a defence dating a person whom one's family does not approve of, as a reason or as provocation. Instead, under this legislation, an accused could only use that defence of provocation if the victim were committing an act of violence that led to an offence indictable by five years or more. We are making sure that, if someone says, "I am going to use the defence of provocation as an excuse for this honour killing", that is simply not possible.

*Government Orders*

As for her earlier question regarding polygamy, absolutely it has been illegal in this country since 1890, but this bill would provide immigration officers the tools they need to render applicants for temporary and permanent residency inadmissible due to polygamy. It is a regulation under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, not a provision in the Criminal Code.

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell Canadians that this bill tackles gender-based violence.

Clearly all members of the House, no matter their party affiliation, are opposed to violence against women and children, whether in connection with forced marriage or polygamy. That has always been the case.

As my colleague from the Green Party said, the Criminal Code already deals with this issue. The bill we are debating today does not resolve these issues and even creates problems in terms of criminalization. There are serious unintended consequences. Children will be deported and family members separated. There are also no prevention tools to provide mental health services to children who have experienced violence, for example. In the case of this bill, discussion and debate is under a gag order. Furthermore, at the committee hearings, a number of experts said that the bill lacks transparency. I will quote Action Canada for Sexual Rights and Health:

The bill reflects a lack of consultation (closed-door meetings and invitation-only consultations), and a lack of transparency, participation and public debate. The proposed amendments are not based on the experiences of women and girls who have survived acts of violence, such as forced marriage.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that because it is very serious to say that we defend women and children when those same women, children and organizations were not consulted and the bill could cause even more serious problems for victims.

• (1625)

[English]

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Speaker, I would agree that this is all about protecting victims. I think sometimes the opposition does not understand that this really is a serious issue. This bill was necessary. There were 219 cases of forced marriage reported in a report released in August 2013. In a two- or three-year period, between 2010 and 2012, there were 219 cases. That is not just one victim too many; that is 219 victims too many.

This bill shows that our government will not tolerate spousal abuse, honour killings, and other gender-based violence. We will not allow any of that to happen as a pretext to immigration as well, and that is a very important point to note, which is addressed in this bill.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 Thunder Bay—Superior North, Rail Transportation; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Public Safety.

[English]

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this important debate on Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Willowdale.

This bill reflects our government's priority for supporting women and girls to live violence-free lives, because a building block for women and children in reaching their full potential is being able to live life free of violence and free of the threat of violence.

[Translation]

As Minister for Status of Women, I am proud of everything that we are doing to eliminate gender-based violence. Bill S-7 builds on our efforts in that regard.

Bill S-7 sends a clear message to people who come to live in Canada and those who live here already. It says that we are committed to ensuring that no girl or woman in Canada becomes a victim of polygamy, forced marriage or violence committed in the name of so-called honour. In other words, these customs are inconsistent with Canadian values, and like every other type of violence against women and girls, they will not be tolerated.

As hon. members know, millions of women and girls throughout the world are victims of violence and inhumane treatment. That includes customs such as forced or underage marriage. That is why Canada is leading the international effort to ensure that forced marriage and underage marriage are recognized as basic human rights violations. Eliminating these practices is one of Canada's top international priorities. We raised it at a session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March, and I am proud to say that I led the Canadian delegation at that session.

• (1630)

[English]

We are committed to helping ensure that these cultural practices do not occur on Canadian soil, through measures like those in Bill S-7. This bill would amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act, and the Criminal Code to provide more protection and support for vulnerable individuals, primarily women and girls.

*Government Orders*

These amendments would improve protection and supports for vulnerable individuals, especially women and girls, in a number of different ways. They would render permanent and temporary residents inadmissible if they practise polygamy in Canada. They would strengthen Canadian marriage laws by establishing a new national minimum age for marriage at 16 years and by codifying the existing legal requirements for free and enlightened consent for marriage and for ending an existing marriage prior to entry into another. They would criminalize certain conduct related to knowing participation in underage and forced marriage ceremonies, and they would include the act of removing a child from Canada for the purpose of such marriage ceremonies. They would help protect potential victims of underage or forced marriages by creating a new and specific preventive court-ordered peace bond where there are grounds to fear that someone would commit an offence in this area. Finally, they would ensure that the defence of provocation would not apply in so-called honour killings and many spousal homicides.

This legislation is a very important part of the multifaceted approach our government is taking to help women and girls live violence free.

Another key action we have taken is to increase funding to the women's program at Status of Women Canada to record levels. In fact, we have invested more than \$162 million in more than 780 projects through the women's program since 2007, including more than \$71 million for projects to end violence against women and girls. Through Status of Women Canada, we have provided funds for projects to eliminate harmful cultural practices using community-based approaches. These projects are building partnerships with cultural communities; settlement, legal, and law enforcement agencies; and school boards. They result in the development of comprehensive, collaborative strategies that address violence against women and girls committed in the so-called name of honour.

By way of example, a project in Montreal led by Shield of Athena Family Services provided training to liaison workers from cultural communities in order to identify at-risk situations and identify sources for assistance of victims.

[*Translation*]

We also teamed up with the Indo-Canadian Women's Association in Edmonton, Alberta. The association mobilized local South Asian and Middle Eastern communities as well as a range of partners, including service providers, faith-based organizations, teaching staff and students.

Together they came up with strategies to eliminate this kind of gender-based violence. These initiatives demonstrate that our government is committed to giving communities the tools they need to combat gender-based violence.

We are also committed to eliminating violence against aboriginal women and girls. That is why we launched our action plan to address family violence and violent crimes against aboriginal women and girls back in April.

[*English*]

This action plan takes immediate and concrete action to prevent violence, support victims, and protect aboriginal women and girls

through new and ongoing commitments of approximately \$200 million over five years.

[*Translation*]

That action plan includes a secretariat to improve co-operation among all stakeholders, including those at the federal level and all other levels of government. That has also been in place since April. Along with the secretariat, we also created a website, where we have posted links to the various funding mechanisms used as part of our action plan.

[*English*]

I am proud of each of these actions by our government that I have spoken about today. However, we all know that no single government or person or community organization acting alone can end violence against women and girls. All Canadians need to be part of the solution.

We must continue to underscore that violence is never acceptable or normal behaviour. We must continue to empower women and girls to speak out. We must keep taking actions like the measures in Bill S-7. This legislation sends a strong message to those who are already in Canada and to those who wish to come to this country that we will not tolerate cultural practices that deprive individuals of human rights.

Bill S-7 is another important step we are taking as a country to help women and girls live free of violence. That is why I am proud to say that I am supporting Bill S-7, and I urge all of my colleagues to do exactly the same. It is in their interest and it is in the interest of human rights that we support these initiatives.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is simple: what is the point of including verbal abuse in the title of the bill? The title suggests that someone saw a culture that they thought was barbaric. Is there any way of knowing what culture that was? Was there just one culture in particular? If there were several, could my colleague give us a list?

Let us imagine a scenario in which a little 13- or 14-year-old girl is forced to marry and she reports it. Her authoritarian father who forced her to marry in the first place will be placed under an order for two years and will no longer be able to travel. That little girl will have a rather miserable home life.

The bill seems to have some shortcomings, and all it does is break down doors that are wide open.

[*English*]

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, I find this absolutely preposterous.

Women who suffer violence, women whom I meet in the emergency departments when I am performing my role as a surgeon, are individuals who deserve our help and support.

What the opposition is suggesting is that maybe they do not come forward with actual concerns and complaints, but when people are victims, they are victims. When their father beats them and they show up in an emergency department, they deserve to be supported.

*Government Orders*

What I would say in response to opposition member's comment about warrants is that we should be doing more. The individuals who perpetuate these crimes deserve to be behind bars, and this government is focused on making sure that this punishment is delivered.

As I have already stated, I hear the member opposite with respect to the title, but let us be very clear: any issue that is a barbaric cultural practice that infringes on human rights is wrong and must not be tolerated.

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will cite a couple of quotes and then I will ask a question.

On November 18, 2014, a victim herself, Aruna Papp, said, in committee:

I commend the government for its leadership in taking a stand on a very difficult issue and for defending the human rights of vulnerable women unable to speak for themselves.

On November 26, 2014, Taima Al-Jayoush, a Montreal-based human rights lawyer, said that when we describe a crime as barbaric, we are simply calling it what it is. No one should identify with it except the ones who have committed such a crime. It is not directed at any certain community.

My question for the Minister of Status of Women is this: when she meets with groups and individuals in her role as minister, what is the feedback she receives on this particular bill?

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, having met with women across the country with respect to this bill and with respect to other issues regarding violence against women and girls and how it should be eliminated, I can tell the member that women are overwhelmingly supportive of these initiatives. Women do not want to be placed in a forced marriage. They do not think the activity of polygamy is acceptable. They do not think being deprived of their rights here on Canadian soil is acceptable behaviour, and they are looking to their government to take action.

I can also tell the member that they are overwhelmingly disappointed that certain members in this House are voting against this bill, because they believe their rights are just as important as those of every other Canadian. They deserve to be protected. They are victims and they deserve to be protected.

I am hearing from Canadian women, whether it be in St. John's, Toronto, Vancouver, or Calgary, that they overwhelmingly support the bill and our championing of women's rights.

• (1640)

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand in the House today to support Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act.

The measures in the bill reflect our Conservative government's unwavering commitment to the protection of vulnerable women and children, whether they are newcomers to Canada or born in this country.

I know that many of my colleagues here today share our government's strong conviction that we must do everything in our power to ensure that barbaric cultural practices such as polygamy,

forced and underage marriage, and so-called honour killings do not occur on Canadian soil. These are practices that discriminate against and perpetrate violence against women and girls, and they have no place in Canadian society.

Now that the bill has been public for several months, Canadians have had the chance to understand and react to its provisions. I have been heartened by the support that Bill S-7 has received. I will provide several examples.

Daphne Bramham of *The Vancouver Sun*, who has covered these issues more than most Canadian journalists, wrote the following in her column on December 9, 2014:

Forced marriages, child marriages and polygamy are barbaric practices and anathema to the equality rights of children and women.

After more than a century of ignoring them, the government's bill takes Canada a step closer toward eliminating them.

In an op-ed in the *National Post* last November 13, Aruna Papp wrote movingly about Bill S-7, relating it to her own personal experiences with abuse. Here is a short excerpt:

Forced into an abusive marriage at 17 and unable to leave it for 18 years, I can attest to the fact that a forced marriage is effectively a life of slavery. I congratulate the Canadian government for taking a bold step on behalf of women who have nowhere to turn for help.

Over the past 30 years, I have founded agencies in Toronto that assist immigrant women; I have met hundreds of women who are victims of forced marriages and domestic violence. The government's "Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act" recognizes the plight of these women. In presenting this bill, the government of Canada has said, in effect, "As a Canadian citizen, you, too, deserve to live a life free of violence and coercion." For this, I am grateful.

On December 12, Tahir Gora, CEO of the Canadian Thinkers' Forum, wrote a blog post for *The Huffington Post* in support of the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. He wrote:

Minister Alexander is right. Violence against women is an absolutely barbaric act. It must be addressed strongly. Forced marriages, polygamy and honour killings happen every day around the globe under the guise of cultural practices. Should those cultural practices not be condemned? Calling a spade a spade should not be a political issue in a country like Canada where human rights guarantee equal rights to women.

I had the opportunity to sit on the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration of the House as we studied Bill S-7. On April 23, immigration lawyer Chantal Desloges told committee members:

I believe the immigration provisions of Bill S-7 send a very strong statement that polygamy is not and will not be tolerated in Canada. The negative effects of polygamy on women and children are very well documented in sociological studies.

She added that the bill sends:

...a concrete statement about Canadian values. I think this is important in a context where our society is increasingly relativist and, in a rush to respect other cultures, we often overlook the fact that there is a reason why our own Canadian culture has developed in the way that it has.

At that same session, Vancouver lawyer and columnist Kathryn Marshall said:

At the heart of this bill is gender equality and the right of women and girls to be equal in Canada. As a woman, I feel very fortunate that I was born in a country in which the rights of women and girls are protected and in which we are equal to men. I feel fortunate that my daughter was born in a country where her gender does not sentence her to a lifetime of second-class citizenship.

At the core is the fact that equality is a fundamental human right in Canada. It is a core of who we are as people, a core value. It's something that cannot be taken for granted. We have to protect it and preserve it.

*Government Orders*

● (1645)

She added:

Gender equality should never be taken for granted, even in a place like Canada, where it is a core value of who we are as people. Critics of this bill have said that such horrendous acts as honour killings, polygamy, and child marriage should not be a priority of this government because they don't happen with enough frequency in this country. To those critics I would say that one occurrence of these brutal and un-Canadian acts is one enough: there should never be any of these acts. We should always take action. The reality is that we're not talking about a few isolated incidents. This is something that's becoming increasingly more common. The trend seems to be that it's occurring with more frequency each year.

With the passage of this bill, Canada will be joining other nations that have taken a strong stance against forced and child marriage by making it illegal.

To critics who have objected to the name of the bill, Ms. Marshall countered, stating:

The horrifying reality is that culture is an essential part of honour violence. In parts of the world it is condoned and is legal. We must not be afraid to label barbaric practices as what they are.

I think that calling the bill what it currently is called shows a strong stance. History has shown us that language is an important tool, and we should use it. We should call these acts what they are, which is barbaric.

Finally, I would like to share the words of Salma Siddiqui, the president of the Coalition of Progressive Canadian Muslim Organizations, who told committee members:

The Government of Canada's decision to table a bill for zero tolerance of barbaric cultural practices is the right move and should be welcomed. For too long women have been oppressed through polygamy and forced marriages....

The bill is really about protecting women and should be seen as a welcome step. People coming to Canada must conform to our values. They have to put aside their past understanding of women. In this country, men and women are equal before the law and in society.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to share these words of praise for Bill S-7 from a number of notable Canadians. I hope that my fellow members of the House will take these words to heart and support the bill's important provisions.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last I looked, we have laws against domestic violence in Canada. If I remember correctly, someone who wants to come to this country is only allowed to bring one spouse, and someone who is in Canada can only be married to one person at a time. If people want to get married again, they have to go through a divorce and all of the regular things.

Therefore, a specific question for my colleague is this: What issue is the government trying to address that is not already covered by current laws? We have laws against polygamy. We do not condone child marriage. We have laws against domestic violence.

Why do we have a bill with a title "barbaric practices"? Would he indicate to me which particular communities they are trying to target with the bill?

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of these provisions for polygamy and sexual assault and so on in law, but they are scattered over a lot of pieces of legislation. This legislation brings them together in one place and in very clear and absolute terms of what this country is and what our shared values are.

With respect to barbaric practices, there are practices that, historically, in many societies, have been considered barbaric. However, as we have evolved into a modern civilized society, some of these have been put aside. In those cultures that do not share our

values, those practices, in our eyes, are barbaric, and they are not permitted in our country.

● (1650)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member and I actually served on the immigration committee for a couple of years. During that time we had the opportunity to discuss a good number of different issues as we tried to fit into the agenda what was important and needed to be addressed. I am sure the member would recall some of those issues. For example, for me one of the issues was visitor visas and the need to do more to deal with those visas and the impact they are having on the lives of Canadians. However, we have not seen very much progress.

Let us fast forward now to Bill S-7. I do not ever recall during my time on the immigration committee when this issue was brought up. Given that we were sitting on the committee together, I wonder if the member can recall any time the issue was brought up.

We will be voting for the bill, because there is no reason to vote against it, with the exception of the title.

We can question why the government is bringing it in at this time. It is an issue of priorities, and it seems to me the government has its priorities mixed up.

Could the member indicate to what degree he can recall this issue being debated when we were both on the immigration committee?

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, it was indeed a pleasure serving with the hon. member on the immigration committee, and we certainly discussed a broad range of issues.

The issue of visitor visas belongs in a separate discussion. However, with respect to cultural practices, polygamy, and so on, the issue came about because as we were doing broad consultations across Canada, we recognized that this was an issue we needed to address. Therefore, we continued our study and addressed this specifically. The end result is Bill S-7.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to begin, and given that this bill is subject to the latest in a long line of time allocation motions, I will say that it is my great pleasure to share my speaking time with my very esteemed colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. I know that she will speak intelligently and will represent her constituents very well.

*Government Orders*

For a bill that is going to cause all sorts of disruptions and, most importantly, result in absolutely unbelievable duplication, it is scandalous that, even if we could not persuade our Conservative colleagues, we do not have enough time to alert the Canadian public as a whole to the dangers associated with the undercurrents of racism, intolerance, extreme rhetoric and incoherence that are the hallmark of this government when it tries to deal with genuine and serious problems to which we need to find an answer. That answer must not amount to legal and legislative fiddling that unfortunately is likely to lead to very harmful consequences, especially for the victims, as we told this government at every stage of this bill, and as a majority of the witnesses said at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. Unfortunately, with its electioneering, shamefully partisan and frankly vote-buying approach, the government is trying to use the legislative tools that are entirely under its control to buy its re-election on the backs of hundreds if not thousands of victims all across Canada.

This is truly depressing. No woman in this country should have to suffer violence or the kind of life that forced or early marriage imposes. In fact, this country we are so proud of, the country willed to us by our ancestors, has worked very hard to promote equality of status between men and women. Introducing this bill, which is quite simply a mess, if we go by the title, is no way to preserve that heritage. I will take the liberty of reading the short title we know so well by now, which gives the impression we are returning to ancient times, to the biblical times of the Old Testament: Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act. Words are our chief tool, as legislators, for taking action in our society and ensuring that our constituents live in the best possible conditions. The government, however, is tossing around loaded terms whose effect is to marginalize a large segment of our population. When shame is heaped on their head by the opposition, they should be ashamed. The opposition was not being unfair; quite the contrary. In the work done in committee, we were very reasonable and proposed only two amendments. In spite of the opinion of the large majority of all 24 witnesses, the government refused even to seriously consider thinking about the two amendments presented by the New Democratic Party.

Despite this sensationalism, the problem has not been resolved—quite the opposite. The minister finally made a proposal through the unelected, illegitimate Senate. Nonetheless, the minister should have committed to holding full and serious consultations on the matter.

• (1655)

One of the concerns expressed by all the witnesses was that in reality, the government is legislating about something we do not fully understand. We do not know the full extent of this phenomenon and there are no reliable statistics. The government is legislating blind and repeating provisions that already exist in the Criminal Code. In other words, it is simply reiterating and repeating legal provisions that prohibit forced marriages and polygamy, among other things. We therefore find ourselves watching the government engage in a huge marketing campaign to show how tough it can be on those who abuse the most vulnerable in our society. However, in reality, those who are really exploiting these oppressed people and victims of forced marriage are the Conservatives when they introduce this type of bill.

In fact, the thing that infuriates me is that this is a recent stunt by the Conservatives. Very modestly, in four years in the House, I have been a member of four different committees. I have seen every trick the Conservatives throw at us to push their agenda through. A very recent practice that is rather odd is that when members from the opposition parties propose amendments in committee, the Conservatives have speaking notes prepared ahead of time to justify their unjustifiable positions.

Having experienced that during the study on Bill C-59, the budget implementation bill, I have to say that we proposed a very reasonable number of amendments. There were times when the governing party's justifications for rejecting amendments bordered on ludicrous. Our amendments were aligned with the concerns and requests we heard from witnesses during the committee's work.

For the benefit of all members of the House, I would like to remind everyone of what the vast majority of the 24 witnesses who spoke to this bill said. They—and this includes pro-Conservative witnesses—expressed serious reservations about the short title, for one thing. It is an insult that goes back to antiquity. It would have been more appropriate in the days of the Romans and the Greeks than it is today. The Conservatives also had reservations about the minimum age of consent, the definition of polygamy, penalties for minors and women and issues related to the defence of provocation.

There comes a time when, faced with a vast majority of opinions on a great many aspects of a bill, one makes concessions and tries to find a way to agree on certain aspects to make it work.

I think that this tired and dying government has reached its limit. The Conservatives are so keen on proving their legitimacy that they are refusing to listen to any opinion that differs from their speeches, which have been pre-formatted by the advisors in short pants in the Prime Minister's Office. These advisors are imposing opinions on people who, if they did not belong to the Conservative Party, would likely be able to express themselves in a very reasonable way. However, they gave up all of their freedom, and apparently their duty to their constituents as well, in order to pander to voters. At election time, they want to be able to tell people to look at how they solved the problems of barbaric cultural practices that are becoming increasingly common in Canada because of immigration and are threatening our way of life.

• (1700)

That is really shameful, and that is why all of my NDP colleagues and I will be voting against this bill.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for participating in the debate on Bill S-7, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act. I spoke to the bill during the second reading debate.



I have been here all day. Most of the response to the bill has been that opposition members do not like the word “barbaric” in the title. As a father of two daughters, any violence against women or honour killing is barbaric, and voting against the bill is barbaric.

When members of his party are out talking to their constituents and this bill comes up, what it does, and that it would help criminalize the issues honour killing and violence against women, are they going to say that kind of violence against women is not barbaric?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague seems to be confused. Is any type of murder legal in Canada? That is the underlying question.

When a term like “barbaric” is used to describe cultural practices, we are basically pointing a finger at a segment of the population, subjecting them to scrutiny and disgracing them. That could polarize our society, which is a very dangerous thing to do. In many countries around the world, this type of situation opens the door to violence against minorities and abuse of power.

Frankly, as a Canadian, that is the type of thing I never want to see happen in our beautiful country.

• (1705)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that one could argue successfully that certain aspects of the legislation are not necessary because the law is there in one form or another already. However, that is not 100% true for all aspects of the legislation. I will use the specific example of establishing a national minimum age of 16. This is completely new and it is not in any legislation or deemed a criminal act today. Members might try to wiggle some room around it and maybe cite this or that, but it is new.

The member, like me, has been in the chamber and passed all kinds of legislation, which have been nowhere near as significant as this aspect in the proposed legislation. Therefore, does the member not see any good whatsoever within the legislation? If the answer to that is yes, as I believe it should be, particularly in establishing a national age, then what specific aspect of the legislation, if passed, will cause harm to Canadians?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his question

There is an aspect of the bill that I forgot to mention in my speech, but I will not mention it now.

There is something very troubling about the Liberals, and there is no denying it. When we studied the anti-terrorism bill, Bill C-51, the Liberals said that they did not agree with the bill, but that they would vote for it, and once they took power—which is highly unlikely—they would change things.

What is very troubling is that they are doing the same thing with Bill S-7, despite the opinion of the majority of witnesses, who pointed out many problems with different parts of the bill. Those problems make it almost impossible to adopt the bill in its current

### *Government Orders*

form, or without significant amendments. In the end, we would find ourselves with a bill that is both counterproductive and unsatisfactory. Thus, the Liberal approach is really pointless. It is a dead end.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. I must inform her that she will only have only about six minutes for her speech.

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to strongly oppose the Conservative government's Bill S-7, the so-called zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act.

The title of the bill is our first indication that it was introduced by the government for partisan purposes and that it promotes xenophobia. Furthermore, the bill does not manage to protect women and girls affected by polygamy, forced marriage or domestic violence.

I want to start by saying that I agree that we must address polygamy, forced marriage and early marriage. These problems exist in Canada, and the government should be looking at finding real solutions. Unfortunately, this bill does not offer solutions.

All forms of violence against women and children are unacceptable. We must invest resources and combat these crimes. However, the bill does not offer the right response to these serious problems. The New Democrats are not the only ones saying so. A number of experts also shared these concerns in committee. The bill could have some very serious consequences for the women and girls it claims to protect. Moreover, the bill could make existing problems even worse.

I just want to comment on the problem of violence against women in Canada. Unfortunately, the current government is refusing to do anything about it. For example, the Conservatives have refused to launch a national investigation into missing and murdered aboriginal women despite broad consensus across the country about the need to address this Canada-wide problem. While the government refuses to take action, aboriginal women remain consigned to difficult and dangerous situations.

Although we support certain very specific measures in Bill S-7, civil society groups have told us that women and girls seeking to escape such dangerous situations did not have the resources they needed to get themselves into safe situations. No woman should be subjected to gender-based violence, which includes forced and early marriage.

Bill S-7 could have serious consequences. It could result in increased social pressure on victims of forced marriage. Victims of polygamy could be deported.

The Conservative government still has not explained how this bill will help victims of polygamy and victims of early and forced marriage. How will deporting victims help them in any way? In reality, this bill puts them in an even more dangerous and precarious situation. That is why we denounce the measures set out in this bill.

*Government Orders*

What is more, the Conservatives did not do any consultation or any studies before introducing this bill in the House, even though they had the resources to do so. This proves that this bill was intended only to play politics and please the Conservative electoral base, not to help the victims of early marriage.

This is a sensationalistic, botched, ill-conceived bill. Instead of introducing such bills, the government should invest in organizations that help women in precarious situations.

We have noted that there is a shortage of services in Canada for these women and girls who do not have access to affordable, safe housing, in particular. How is a woman supposed to get out of a violent situation if she cannot find safe housing?

● (1710)

As we know, there is also a lack of psychological support. It is important to offer psychological support to these women, who often find themselves in violent situations. Furthermore, the families are often traumatized, because they have to go through the criminal justice system and the immigration system, which are complicated. These women have a hard time navigating Canada's complex systems. We need to support them.

In closing, I would like to quote Deepa Mattoo, a staff lawyer with the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, who appeared before the committee to comment on this bill. She said:

Giving it a shock factor name will not eliminate the issue. Instead it will force perpetrators to take this underground, ensuring the victims and potential victims are isolated from any resources.

For the reasons I mentioned, I cannot support Bill S-7.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, June 9, 2015, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

● (1715)

[*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.

*Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:*

● (1755)

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Cape Breton—Canso and I are very close. We sit with each other and live with each other, but when I stood, I was called by his name and I would appreciate it if it were changed.

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

(*Division No. 456*)

## YEAS

## Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge	Butt
Byrne	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Casey	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Cotler	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dion	Dreeshen
Dubourg	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Eglinski
Eyking	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Foote
Freeland	Galipeau
Gallant	Garneau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Holder
James	Jones
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Murray	Nicholson
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne

*Private Members' Business*

Perkins	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger	Seeback
Sgro	Shea
Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
St-Denis	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Trudeau	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriot	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Williamson
Wilks	Woodworth
Wong	Young (Oakville)
Yelich	Yurdiga
Young (Vancouver South)	
Zimmer— 185	

## NAYS

## Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg	Boulerice
Brahmi	Brosseau
Caron	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Freeman	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes	Hyer
Julian	Lapointe
Latendresse	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
Mai	Marston
Masse	Mathysen
May	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Péclet	Pilon
Quach	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Rousseau
Sandhu	Sellah
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Toone	Tremblay— 86

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

**The Speaker:** It being 5:56 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**MISSING ABORIGINAL WOMEN**

The House resumed from May 11 consideration of the motion.

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to the motion brought forward by my colleague, the member for St. Paul's, who is also the aboriginal affairs critic for the Liberal caucus. The motion was seconded by my colleague, the member for Etobicoke North, who happens to be the critic for the Status of Women in the Liberal caucus.

My colleagues have come to the House of Commons today, asking that there be an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, simply because it is what Canadians are asking for. Over the number of years that we have sat in the House of Commons, going back to the Sisters in Spirit report in 2009, people across Canada have asked for an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls.

Today, while we still have many victims and their families out there, while we still have people grieving for their lost ones, while we still have indigenous leaders, advocates, the international community and every provincial and territorial government asking for this, including members in our caucus in the House of Commons, the government continues to refuse to act on those requests and recommendations.

This is a very serious issue, one that has affected many indigenous women and girls in our country. In fact, if we were looking at this from an international perspective, Canadians all across the country would be saying that this was unbelievable and that something needed to be done.

It is no different in Canada. It is hard to imagine that we have so many indigenous women and girls who are being abused, murdered and are victims of violence, yet we see no action to call an inquiry into the root causes of this problem.

Just a while ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released 94 recommendations. Those recommendations were with regard to the unfinished journey of healing and reconciliation for indigenous people. In that report, there was also a call to action for government. It called on the government, in consultation with aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the victimization of aboriginal women and girls.

Recommendation 41 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report directly asks the Government of Canada to do this. It asks the government to investigate missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, and to look at links to the intergenerational legacy of residential schools.

*Private Members' Business*

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission did not make the decisions of the report lightly. It did so after tremendous thought and insight, and after tremendous consultation and input. This is what it firmly believes as indigenous people in Canada.

In addition, we have had so many more speak out. We have heard from the victims and families. In my riding, the life of a young woman by the name of Loretta Saunders was taken. Her sister, Delilah Saunders, a brave young woman, stood for her sister to call for an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. She stood with her mother who called for an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. She stood with many others across Canada. Unfortunately, their voices are still not being heard by the Conservative government.

What about the family of Bernice Rich, a young Inuit woman from Natuashish? She was murdered in her neighbouring community of Sheshatshiu. Her life was taken for no reason? Why? Because she was an aboriginal woman? Is her life not more valuable or as valuable as all others?

That is the sad commentary, when a murderer is on trial and can give no reason. There was absolutely no reason why this young woman was victimized, terrorized and murdered.

• (1800)

I would challenge the government to view the Highway of Tears, which my colleague from St. Paul's had invited so many members to do. I went to that viewing and I saw the numbers of women who were missing or whose lives were lost on the Highway of Tears. I sat in that room that evening with family members who were grieving. In their grief they are looking for healing, and in that healing they are looking for action from the Government of Canada. It is so sad to look into their eyes and faces. It is so sad to look at them when they tell us the stories of the many women who have been lost and murdered yet there has been no action to get to the root of the problem.

We know that this can be changed. We live in a society of hope. We live in a society where we know that change can happen, but that change takes all of us working together to make that difference. The government has not been prepared to work to make that difference despite the fact that in May 2014 the RCMP released a report which identified almost 1,200 indigenous women and girls who had gone missing or had been murdered since 1980 in Canada. It also noted that despite the fact that indigenous women represented only 4% of women in Canada, this demographic accounted for 8% of female homicide victims in 1984 and a staggering 23% by 2012.

As of 2012, one in four female homicide victims in this country is indigenous. Last summer, in the wake of the Tina Fontaine murder in Winnipeg, which we are all very much aware of, and on which my colleague, the member for Winnipeg North, has risen in this House in previous days to ask questions, we heard the Prime Minister's insensitive comment when he said, "we should not view this as sociological phenomenon" and dismissed the root causes as part of the problem. How can he do that when he leads a country where 1,200 indigenous women and girls have gone missing? How can he say that when we have seen the percentage of indigenous women go from 8% of those female victims of homicide to 23% in just a few

years? How can he say that when he looks at the families of Tina Fontaine, Loretta Saunders, Bernice Rich, and of so many more?

It gets worse because as the families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls have been clear that they have not been listened to, treated with respect or felt supported by the government opposite, the Prime Minister then made another shocking admission during his year-end interview with Peter Mansbridge when he said that this issue is not high on his radar. He not only shocked the families that are grieving and suffering the loss of loved ones, but he shocked the nation, a nation that feels that there should be an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, a nation that feels that getting to the root causes of this would change it, a nation that lives in hope for action.

We call upon the members of the House of Commons to support this motion that has been brought forward by the member for St. Paul's and by the Liberal caucus. We ask that members support an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in this country. Just as every province, territory, civil organization, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and many families have already asked for, we once again make that plea to the House of Commons.

• (1805)

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about our government's actions to address violence against aboriginal women and girls.

Our government remains committed to supporting better outcomes for aboriginal women, girls and families on reserve. In fact, we offer a number of programs and services that directly support this goal. These include funding for family violence prevention, for child and family services, as well as programs that encourage economic security and prosperity through skills and training, housing and education.

We also understand that the federal government cannot solve the tragic and intricate problem of violence against women on its own. That is why on February 27, 2015, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, the Minister of Status of Women, representatives of provincial and territorial governments, national aboriginal leaders and family members attended a national roundtable here in Ottawa. All participants discussed better prevention, safety, policing and justice measures to address violence against aboriginal women and girls across Canada.

Our government is taking concrete action and will continue efforts with our partners in the provincial and territorial governments, aboriginal organizations and communities. For example, our government's action plan to address family violence and violent crimes against aboriginal women and girls responds to all 16 recommendations outlined by the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women. Many of the recommendations speak to supporting communities on reserve.

*Private Members' Business*

The family violence prevention program provides a refuge for victims of violence, raises greater awareness of the issue of family violence and provides families and communities with tools to help them deal with the issue of violence. The family violence prevention program has a budget of \$30.4 million to support the day-to-day operations of 41 shelters and to fund community-driven proposals for family violence prevention projects on reserve.

As of April 1, 2015, an increase to the program's budget will begin to fund similar violence prevention activities for aboriginal women who live both on and off reserve. Ongoing family violence prevention program funding will provide stability for prevention activities and will allow communities to deliver longer-term projects.

Our government knows how important it is to keep our streets and communities safe and to create environments where aboriginal women and girls are empowered, respected and safe.

Many Canadians are not aware that because of a legislative gap posed by the Indian Act, until recently, women living on reserve did not have access to basic matrimonial rights and protections in their communities. These are rights that are afforded to every other Canadian living off reserve, and rights that our government believes should be afforded to those living on reserve as well.

To provide these women and children on reserve with access to basic rights and protections, our government passed the Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act. To assist first nation communities with the implementation of the act, a Centre of Excellence for Matrimonial Real Property, operating at arm's length from the federal government, was established.

Beyond establishing these rights for women and girls living on reserve, our government also repealed section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act. This ensures that aboriginal peoples in Canada have full access to the protections of the Canadian Human Rights Act. This step opened a door to human rights justice that had been blocked for over three decades.

We are committed to working with all our partners in order to bring an end to the cycle of violence and to ensure families have the support and protection they need in times of crisis. One way to do that is by helping to provide women in first nation communities with the skills and opportunities they need to earn an income. This enables them to better support themselves and their families.

Helping to create opportunities, including providing women with employability and self-reliance, informs every step our government takes. In fact, our overall policy focus aims to create the very conditions that are necessary for healthy, prosperous and safe communities.

For example, we have invested \$241 million to provide first nations youth who are currently on income assistance with personalized skills and job readiness training. This provides them with the right tools to enjoy the benefits of a good job and paves the road toward financial security.

We have also improved the urban aboriginal strategy to help aboriginal peoples living in urban centres get the support they need to participate in the local economy.

●(1810)

These are steps that our government has taken. They are steps that will have a profound impact on the lives of aboriginal women and girls. I find it perplexing that members of the opposition have consistently opposed these measures.

These steps are just the beginning. We know that more needs to be done. Economic action plan 2015 proposes to provide \$20 million over five years, starting in 2015-16, to help support first nations achieve better education outcomes, including building partnerships with provincial school systems. This funding would build on our existing investment of \$500 million over seven years for first nations school infrastructure.

Our Conservative government is committed to working with first nations partners toward our shared goal of ensuring that first nations students have access to quality education. Being a committed partner in first nations education reform means that our government will continue to look for opportunities to work with first nations that are interested in pursuing education reform.

All parties that are involved in preventing heinous crimes know that to reduce violence, more prevention and awareness is needed. That is why in the week prior to the national roundtable on missing and murdered aboriginal women our government announced a 10-year investment of \$100 million to prevent, detect, and combat family violence and child abuse. The Minister of Health also launched a call for proposals for organizations to submit applications to advance community-based projects that support victims of domestic violence and child abuse, and those at risk of these forms of violence. Through Health Canada's first nations and Inuit health branch, we will focus on how to help communities and health professionals improve the physical and mental health of victims of violence and help stop intergenerational cycles of violence and abuse.

Our goal throughout all of this is to prevent, detect, and combat family violence. These projects will be community-led because we believe that change starts at the community level. Those working at the community level know what the specific needs are in their communities and they know the way to create real change in their communities.

These are just some of the key initiatives that our government is working on right now to address this issue. Our government looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with aboriginal groups, provincial governments, and territories. We know that the federal government has a role to play in addressing violence against aboriginal women and girls. We also know that the violence experienced by aboriginal women will only stop if we continue to take concrete action.

*Private Members' Business*

Now is not the time for more talk or for more study. It is time to work together with willing partners to end violence against indigenous women, and that is exactly what this government is working toward. I would encourage all members of the House to get on board with that philosophy and with the actions that we are taking.

● (1815)

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are standing here today on unceded Algonquin territory.

I want to begin my speech by expressing our support for a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. In fact, this very call was a key component of my private member's motion, Motion No. 444, a national action plan to end violence against women, a motion that was unfortunately voted down by the Conservative government a few short weeks ago.

It is clear to us in the NDP that an inquiry must be part of comprehensive action. Time and time again, indigenous peoples have been told that they have to choose between basic services and the respect of their rights or some other impossible choice, that it is always one way or another. That is simply not the case.

When the current government does speak of violence against women, it is within that frame. It is always presented as though survivors of violence and families of murdered and missing indigenous women cannot have both action and an inquiry.

Sadly, that narrow perspective does not respond to what indigenous women, indigenous communities, and indigenous leaders are calling for.

Over the last few years, I have met with women and men across Canada, in urban centres, rural communities, first nation communities, and Métis communities. We met to discuss the need for a national action plan to end violence against women. I heard time and time again that an inquiry and a national action plan are imperative.

My colleagues and I, in the NDP, have listened. As a response to the calls for action, the leader of our party pledged to begin an inquiry within the first 100 days of an NDP government. New Democrats have a long history of standing in this House, echoing the calls for justice and calling for a national inquiry. As I noted, my motion called for an inquiry explicitly as part of a national action plan.

We do need comprehensive action, however, because we need to address the root causes of violence. We need to recognize that a national action plan and a national inquiry are two sides of the same coin. The intentions and the principles involved in both complement each other. An inquiry is an opportunity for families to find justice and for root causes to be understood. Action is needed immediately to address the high rates of violence indigenous women experience.

I would like to quote the words of Leah Gazan, a member of Wood Mountain Lakota Nation, who works with the faculty of education at the University of Winnipeg, who powerfully stated, "This is not an either-or discussion". She said it requires investments when dealing with the level of crisis noted by international organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch,

and the United Nations. The government needs to stop playing games by not including communities in the discussion. We need action now and an inquiry now.

A national action plan focused upon the high rates of violence against indigenous women would include the restoration of community-led programming that has been de-funded and would lead to better support for programs that have been cut.

It would include investments in housing. We know that the impacts of cuts to housing initiatives are visible in communities across the country. Many women living on reserve live in third-world conditions. These conditions of poverty contribute to social breakdown and conflict and, at the end of the day, women have nowhere to go.

We know that very few indigenous communities have access to women's shelters in their own community, which is something that must also be addressed as part of a national comprehensive action plan. In fact, 70% of northern and remote communities do not have safe houses or emergency shelters. That means that communities have fewer public spaces for women to be safe and fewer places for women to go to access support and resources to deal with the trauma they face.

I would like to quote the words of Dawn Harvard, the interim president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, who said:

We must work together—Aboriginal Peoples and all levels Governments to put in place measures that protect Aboriginal women and girls. Anything less is a denial of our basic human rights. The provinces and territories and Aboriginal Peoples have all supported the call for a national public inquiry and now we need to work together, along with the Federal Government to implement a comprehensive, national framework of action to end violence!

● (1820)

We know that Canada has been called out for decades by indigenous peoples and leaders, and in these last few years the calls have only been getting louder, even from the international community. In a report released March 6, CEDAW concluded that Canada's ongoing failure to address the extreme violence against indigenous women and girls constitutes a grave violation of their human rights. This investigation concluded that Canada has a disproportionately high rate of missing and murdered indigenous women, that there is a lack of interest on the part of the government in investigating the cases of missing and murdered indigenous women, that the structural issues within Canada's criminal justice system have gone unaddressed, and that, fundamentally, the government's refusal to deal with root causes of violence against indigenous women is a violation of their human rights.

Indigenous women and the families of missing and murdered indigenous women do not need an inquiry to relive the trauma they face. Indigenous peoples deserve an inquiry to bring long-awaited justice. Canada needs an inquiry to bring to light the state's own complicity in the long history of violence against indigenous women. An inquiry is an opportunity to expose the dark to the light and to bring us all onto a path of reconciliation.

*Private Members' Business*

I do want to note that one of the key recommendations put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission last week was to include a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

On May 6, the government voted against enshrining the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Canadian law. On May 27, the government voted against my motion for a national action plan to end violence against women. It was a motion that intended to address core contributing elements and implement a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Both of these pieces of legislation were opportunities to do the right thing, to put principles ahead of politics, and to make a difference.

I would like to quote my colleague the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. In his contribution and his speech in the emergency debate on missing and murdered indigenous women in the fall of 2014, he said:

The violence that is perpetrated against indigenous women is the same violence against the environment today and the same violence that assaulted parents and grandparents in residential schools.

As parliamentarians, part of our work is to decide how to allocate resources to achieve social and economic goals, and it seems to me that ending violence against women and putting an end to the national epidemic that is missing and murdered indigenous women is a primary goal. Reducing violence and preventing the disappearance or murder of more women and girls should have been the goal of the current and past governments.

We need to recognize that it is rooted in the trauma of residential schools, day schools, the sixties scoop, and ongoing assimilationist policies. Institutional colonialism attempted to devalue indigenous women, strip away their humanity, and silence their voices. We must recognize that ongoing cycles of poverty in first nations and in urban indigenous communities only serve to compound the trauma.

While the government let \$1.1 billion go unspent, programs working to support families and survivors of violence have been ended because of funding cuts. Organizations like NWAC, Pauktuutit, and the many grassroots organizations that made prevention programs part of their work saw their funding decreased.

The government may talk about action, but on the ground there is not much to show for it. In fact, we argue that the government is not just not part of the solution, but it is part of the problem.

An inquiry is necessary, and my New Democratic colleagues and I know that it should not come at the expense of real action. It is not a choice. We do not have to accept either-or. Ending violence against indigenous women is a priority for the NDP, and it requires comprehensive action.

We will not stop until no indigenous woman, no woman, is missing or murdered ever again.

• (1825)

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place and discuss an issue of such gravity to the Canadian public.

In doing so, I want to begin by saluting the work of my colleague the member for Churchill, who just made another passionate speech. I cannot remember how many times she has spoken out on this issue in the House; I have lost count. It is always moving when she does so.

I want to say that, if there is any issue that is nonpartisan in nature, it is this one. I want to, therefore, salute the member for St. Paul's and the member for Labrador. Both members have spoken eloquently in support of the motion by the member for St. Paul's.

I want to just read the motion:

That, in the opinion of the House, the tragic and inequitable issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls is of critical importance for all Canadians;

Who could oppose that?

...that the government has failed to provide justice for the victims, healing for the families, or an end to the violence;

That would also appear to be uncontroversial.

...and that the House call on the government to take immediate action to deal with this systemic problem and call a public inquiry.

It would appear that the last part is what may separate the government from the opposition on this motion. I say it "may" because I note that the motion by the member for Churchill was defeated, Motion No. 444, a motion that would have done exactly what this motion calls for, an inquiry, but also a number of other measures.

It was defeated with every Conservative member except one voting against it. It talked about prevention. It talked about support for research, advocacy, and the like. To everyone's surprise, that was defeated by the government in this place.

Why is this important? Why do we continue to talk about something that has drawn shame for Canada from across the world? When the United Nations came in 2008, the committee for the elimination of discrimination against women, it invoked what is called an optional protocol to conduct an inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

Finally in 2015, it came into Canada to investigate. In its report, to our embarrassment as Canadians, to our shame, it concluded that Canada's ongoing failure to address the extreme violence against indigenous women and girls constitutes "a grave violation" of their human rights.

As a Canadian, I know that anyone watching will share the sense of shame that I feel, the embarrassment, that our country had to be called out by a United Nations agency for its failure in this respect. More than 1,000 people are affected. They are of aboriginal ancestry, but they are fellow Canadians. That is why I think we all stand together and say this is just a shocking stain on our international reputation.

I am proud to say that the Leader of the Opposition has committed publicly, on more than one occasion, that within the first 100 days of forming government, he would call a national inquiry. Surely, it is long overdue.

*Private Members' Business*

He has recognized, as so many have in the debates over this topic, that this is a systemic issue. Two words strike me. The first is epidemic, because it is an epidemic of violence. These lost souls and their loved ones and the suffering they are going through is an epidemic

The second word is systemic. It is a systemic problem, because it is rooted in poverty and what goes along with poverty: poor health, mental health issues, homelessness, lack of justice, addictions, low educational attainment, and so forth, the very precarious nature of the lives of so many people whose fate we are discussing in this place tonight.

It is interesting to hear the parliamentary secretary stand in this place and talk about why this is so unnecessary and so forth, that everything is just fine, that we have repealed section 67 of the Human Rights Act, and that is going to make things better. It is not.

What has the government done but cut funding? I can remember a day when the court challenges program was set up in 2006, which would allow litigation under section 67 of the Human Rights Act that might have addressed these issues.

What did the government do? It killed the funding for that program entirely, as if aboriginal people, already poor, are going to have the wherewithal to advance their causes in courts or in human rights tribunals. It sounds just great until we go a little further.

●(1830)

In 2006, enormous cuts were made to Status of Women Canada. Most of its regional offices were closed. It did great work to support aboriginal women in causes like that. However, once again, when the funding is cut to these organizations, it should not surprise any Canadian that we will have problems.

I was at a meeting this morning in which a number of groups came together and produced a report called "Dismantling Democracy: Stifling debate and dissent in Canada". Cindy Blackstock, a passionate aboriginal advocate for children, spoke about the harassment the Privacy Commissioner of Canada had found she faced as she tried to go about her business in advocating for aboriginal women, and the surveillance she had undergone.

In the context of that, the report talks about the cuts that the federal government has made to support indigenous voices. According to the report, between 2012 and 2015, the federal government cut approximately \$60 million to indigenous leadership organizations. The Assembly of First Nations, which analyzed these budget figures, found that these cuts constituted a 59% drop in funding.

When the government cuts the funding for organizations that support aboriginal women in their quest for justice, when it cuts the court challenges program, when it cuts the Status of Women budget and then says that it is no problem that we have a section in the Human Rights Act so all is well, it is cynical in the extreme.

The quest for justice is taking place across the country. For over 20 years, people in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver have been marching to address the issue. We had the horrors of the Pickton affair. We have the Highway of Tears. A lot of this happens in my province of British Columbia.

Year after year, the New Democratic Party members have been calling for an inquiry. I salute the member for St. Paul's for coming to this issue, but this is one that we have been addressing for so many years.

In my particular part of the world, Victoria, I want to talk about the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. Jeannette MacInnis and Paul Lacerte, the leaders of that organization, have something called the Moose Hide Campaign. I attended one of their annual events not long ago in Victoria. It is about aboriginal men talking responsibility for violence. It is a very moving thing to do to go through one of their days, as I did not long ago.

I want to salute the work of Victoria Pruden, of Bridges for Women, who has been so strong on this issue. Also, the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre has drawn the attention of its clientele to the issues we are addressing tonight.

The member for Labrador pointed powerfully to something that deserves repetition. She pointed out that recommendation 41 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was that there be an inquiry into the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. She pointed out that it was tied to the legacy of residential schools, the effect of which we see in all the communities across Canada affected by the scourge of that racist system and what we now have to deal with as a consequence of that misguided Government of Canada policy from so many years ago.

How many Canadians will forget the picture of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development sitting in the room when Justice Sinclair was making his call for that inquiry. He was sitting when everyone else was applauding. That picture is indelibly marked on my memory for sure. I was so ashamed to watch that today.

The government calls the Tina Fontaine issue not a sociological problem, but just another crime, another criminal issue. It says that going after the root causes is not high on the Prime Minister's radar, as he himself said to Peter Mansbridge. It should be high on the radar of Canadians. It should be high on all our radars.

It should be shocking to Canadians to have an international UN agency come to Canada and call attention to the discrepancies in our legal system and our failure to address the large percentage of our population. That over one-third of prisoners in women's prisons are aboriginal is a shocking statistic that all Canadians should pause and note.

I speak in strong support of the motion and commend it to all members of the House of Commons. It is long overdue that we do the right thing for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

●(1835)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Resuming debate.

Accordingly, I invite the hon. member for St. Paul's for her right of reply. The hon. member has up to five minutes.

The hon. member for St. Paul's.



*Private Members' Business*

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Victoria for his very important and value-added comments in this important debate. I recognize his work and the importance of human rights, but again, the definition of epidemic is that it actually has to stop. We thank that member and the member for Churchill for this work, which really should not be partisan.

On this day, when we in our party are talking a lot about parliamentary reform, I cannot help but be reminded of two years ago, when in this House, on Valentine's Day, we debated the need for a special committee. A little more than a year later, a year ago, we found that the special committee had completely been ruined by the presence of five parliamentary secretaries who did the bidding of their ministers and refused to listen to what the witnesses had said. They replaced recommendations that were much more in keeping with what had been heard at the committee with self-serving recommendations and a veritable laundry list of what the government was already doing, and thought it was doing well, using verbs like "continue" and "maintain", instead of actually deciding that the government had to do something definitive and listen to the witnesses, the premiers who had spoken, the national aboriginal organizations, and particularly the families. They are in need of a national public inquiry so that we can get to the bottom of this and actually do the right thing.

As we stand here on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin people, I have to think of one of the first families I heard speak about this. It was regarding the terrible disappearance of Shannon and Maisy from Kitigan Zibi and how they had just been written off as runaways, even though their cell phones and purses were left on the table. Their stepfather was astounded. He said that as the stepfather of a missing girl, if he was not questioned, then who was questioned? He meant that this was never investigated properly and that somehow this was viewed as inevitable.

The current government is on the wrong side of history. The Prime Minister's heartless remarks on two occasions have shown us that he will be seen to have been on the wrong side of history on this. The reason it is wrong is because of what the member for Labrador said. What was once a faceless problem, and we had the NWAC faceless dolls campaign, now has names. We know the name of Tina Fontaine. We know the name of Loretta Saunders. We know and heard from Rinelle Harper, who was a survivor who had it almost happen to her last summer, in her poignant remarks at the AFN meeting.

We have seen the Walking With Our Sisters campaign and the haunting, beaded vamps by women and girls across this country who have made that amazing art. I hope that all members of this House will see, from the Walking With Our Sisters campaign, those haunting blue and black images of eyes peering and a sort of Grand & Toy beaded name tag on the vamp that says "my name is...", and scrawled there it says "who cares".

People care. Canadians care. This is not an aboriginal issue. It is not a women's issue. This is a Canadian tragedy and Canadians now expect it to stop. It will be an election issue.

As the member for Labrador said, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission spent six years studying seven generations of tragedy,

and the members of the commission themselves know that there has to be an inquiry on the missing and murdered.

The Legal Strategy Coalition on missing murdered women includes Cheryl Maloney, Christa Big Canoe, Kim Stanton, and Mary Eberts. They know that there have been 700 recommendations in 40 studies, none of them acted on.

We need an inquiry just to find out why none of these have been acted upon. The terms of reference will be hugely important. It is not good enough just to produce a report. The pedagogical approach will mean that all Canadians are with us. All Canadians will understand the root causes, the sexism and racism in policing, and what we have to do.

● (1840)

Tomorrow the RCMP will probably bring out a report. It may well try to demonize men, but as Justice Sinclair said, we have to tie this to the problems with residential schools. I hope that all MPs in the House find the heart tomorrow, when they stand in the House and vote, to think of those families and think of those girls. They are not faceless anymore. As members of Parliament, we have to do something and stop this epidemic now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): 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 nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 17, 2015, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

\* \* \*

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**

The House resumed from April 29 consideration of the motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Pursuant to Standing Order 37, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Motion No. 585 under private members' business.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for York Centre.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to address Motion No. 585, a rather wholly redundant motion, considering our government has already done the measures this motion calls for and more.

Since we formed government in 2006, we have been squarely focused upon what matters most to Canadians: that is, creating jobs and economic growth. It only makes sense, then, that the drivers of job creation, i.e. small businesses, receive as much tax relief as we can provide to them. After all, small business accounts for 99% of all businesses in Canada and employs half of the working men and women in the private sector.

Our government has cut red tape for business, lowered employee premiums, and cut their taxes so they can create more jobs.

Our record is strong. We cut the small business tax rate to 11% and increased the amount of annual eligible income for this lower rate from \$300,000 to \$500,000.

Economic action plan 2015 continues to break new ground. To encourage small business growth, we would further reduce the small business tax rate to 9% by 2019. This would be the largest tax decrease for small businesses in more than 25 years. It is estimated that this measure would reduce taxes for small businesses by \$2.7 billion over the 2015-16 to 2019-20 period.

However, cutting the small business tax rate is not all we have done. Our government has also increased the lifetime capital gains exemption, a measure that is estimated will deliver \$1 billion of federal tax relief annually to small business owners and owners of farm and fishing businesses.

We are also reducing small business EI premiums by introducing the small business job credit. This credit is expected to save small businesses more than \$550 million over 2015 and 2016.

As the hon. member should know, manufacturing accounts for more than 10% of our GDP and over 60% of our merchandise exports, and it employs 1.7 million Canadians all across the country. However, as we heard lately, the Liberal leader questions the role of manufacturing in Canada. I will tell members something. Our government does not. For our government, the words "made in Canada" fuel pride.

However, we cannot address the challenges of today with yesterday's thinking, as the opposition would have us do. Our government is giving manufacturers the tools they need to create jobs now. That is why we are proud to extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for machinery and equipment used in manufacturing and processing. This 10-year tax incentive would result in a deferral that is expected to reduce federal taxes for manufacturers by \$1.1 billion over the period from 2016-17 to 2019-20, facilitating investment in their businesses today.

We are also launching the automotive supplier innovation program. This investment of \$100 million over the next five years would support our auto parts industry as it continues to evolve and establishes a secure role in global supply chains.

We know the production of high-value-added goods and services contributes to enhanced opportunities for Canadians and Canadian

businesses, including job creation, economic diversification, and increased trade. Since 2006, our government has invested more than \$13 billion in new funding in all facets of the innovation ecosystem, including advanced research, research infrastructure, talent development, and business innovation.

Our government has been hard at work to connect researchers with the funding they need so that they can commercialize their innovations and bring them to market. Our government intends to continue to support the pillars of a knowledge-based economy, as outlined in "Seizing Canada's Moment: Moving Forward in Science, Technology and Innovation 2014".

This strategy, released in December 2014, highlights our government's commitment to support research excellence in areas of strength and relevance to Canada. It also highlights our government's commitment to the post-secondary education sector, industry, and government institutions through research partnerships focused upon developing talent and advancing innovation in Canada.

To build on this, economic action plan 2015 would provide more than \$1.5 billion over five years to advance the renewed science, technology, and innovation strategy's objectives. This includes long-term sustained advanced research support through the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the federal granting councils.

Based upon our contribution, our researchers will be given preferential access to ensure that we remain on the forefront of these scientific endeavours. We are ensuring that our researchers continue to have the leading-edge lab facilities and other resources that they need to be the best in the world.

• (1845)

I must reiterate that over 1.2 million net new jobs have been created by our government since the depths of the recession. This is a fact. It is the best job creation record in the G7. Our government is working hard to get more Canadians working, and as long as there are people looking for work, our job is not done. We are also working hard to ensure that these jobs are quality jobs, and our efforts are showing results. The majority of jobs created are in the private sector. They are full time and they are high-paying.

Our government remains focused on what matters most to Canadians, which is jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity. Our low-tax plan is unlike the plans of the Liberals and the NDP, which are proposing massive tax hikes that would kill jobs. We are committed to keeping taxes low. Not only would these tax hikes kill jobs, but they would also increase the cost of living for middle-class Canadians, which is counter to what the member is proposing.

If the opposition member is really serious about creating jobs, the opposition should start by supporting economic action plan 2015.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1850)

[Translation]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, again, I certainly will not have enough time to say everything I want to say about this motion so I am relying on your totally impartial time management skills.

I am particularly pleased that this motion, Motion No. M-585, moved by my colleague from Saint-Lambert, allows me to give a bit of hope not only to my constituents, but to all Canadians when it comes to the economic measures that would be introduced by the NDP, which, as everyone knows, has a good chance of forming the next government.

I am particularly pleased that my speech follows that of my colleague from York Centre, who said that the motion was redundant. It is probably redundant because his own government decided to take some of the ideas in the motion and incorporate them into its budget, proving the merits of the NDP's proposals. However, obviously a copy is never the same as the original. The Conservatives managed to do less than what we were offering.

It always surprises me when I hear my colleagues say or fuel the illusion that the Conservative government creates jobs, when ever since they formed a majority government, we have seen the Conservatives cut thousands of jobs. It would take a lot to convince me that a government, regardless of its political stripe, creates jobs. The role of a government is to create the right conditions to allow entrepreneurs, the business people in this country, to create jobs. The real job creators are the men and women in the business community.

It seems to me as though the Conservatives' policies in recent years have had some rather negative consequences. The breaks given to big business do not seem to have been reinvested into the economy. Members will all remember what I would essentially call a cry or a plea for help from the former finance minister, who urged big business to take that dead money and reinject it into the economy. We know that the Conservatives' theory is that tax cuts should lead to job creation, but it is clear that this has not worked at all. Furthermore, there are 200,000 more unemployed workers in Canada than there were before the recession. Since the Conservatives came to power, their economic policy has resulted in 1,300,000 unemployed workers.

My riding is reeling from this government's economic decisions. For example, 120 jobs were lost when Target closed. Many families are struggling, and many part-time workers do not have access to employment insurance benefits.

Members will probably recall the Conservatives' slogan during the last campaign: "Our regions in power". Their slogan appears to have become "Our regions abandoned". The Mauricie region is suffering as a result of the Conservatives' mismanagement. Wood processing is at a standstill and the manufacturing industry is slowing to a crawl. So many companies have shut down, so it makes sense that the household purchasing power in my region has been reduced. According to Statistics Canada, families owe \$1.63 for every dollar earned.

While the Conservatives' poor economic record speaks for itself, the Liberals' plan is conspicuous by its silence. The Liberals are

abandoning the 1.7 million manufacturing workers. The Liberal leader himself said that he did not have a plan to help the manufacturing sector get back on its feet. The Conservatives have been an economic failure and the Liberals have no plan, but the NDP is going to set things straight. We are making concrete proposals to stimulate the economy and job creation. We will start by lowering the small and medium-sized business tax rate.

The Conservatives deliberately gave tax breaks to big business. To justify these cuts, the government claimed that higher profits for big business would stimulate economic growth and job creation through productive investment. We see that the Conservatives' dogmatic position was quickly negated by the facts. Several studies have shown that companies are not investing their savings in the economy. Thirty-two per cent of GDP remains in the cash reserves of these major corporations. This money, which has been accumulated as a result of the Conservatives' tax cuts, is not being used to create jobs or innovate.

I would like to quote in passing the conclusion of a study carried out by Canadian Labour Congress economists:

• (1855)

...cuts in corporate income tax have contributed to a significant increase in cash reserves held by corporations, delivered higher compensation to CEOs, cost Canadians billions in lower than expected government revenues, led to a higher federal deficit and debt, and cuts to public services.

The Conservatives have chosen to tailor their economic measures to big business to the detriment of SMEs. The Conservatives have almost eliminated the tax advantage of SMEs, which are now facing unfair competition from big business.

The NDP has chosen to focus its economic policy on SMEs because they are vital to job creation in Canada. We are choosing to help SMEs because they have been responsible for the creation of 78% of new jobs in the private sector in the last decade. Small business is the engine of job creation in Canada.

For that reason, the NDP is proposing to reduce the small business tax rate from 11% to 10% immediately, in the first year. This immediate reduction of the tax rate will inject \$600 million into Quebec's and Canada's small businesses.

As soon as the financial situation allows, we will further reduce the small business tax rate from 10% to 9%. Once this measure is fully implemented, small business will have some breathing room, as they say.

Martine Hébert, senior vice-president of CFIB, supports our initiative and has congratulated the leader of the NDP for proposing the small business tax cut.

The Conservative government borrowed the measure, but will implement it in small doses by making cuts of 0.5% at a time.

*Private Members' Business*

We will extend the accelerated capital cost allowance. This measure is crucial for the manufacturing sector because it will encourage new investments and improve the international competitiveness of our businesses.

Thanks to this NDP measure, manufacturers will save \$600 million a year for two years. Small business will mainly use this measure to increase their exports, because 90% of Canadian exporters are small businesses.

To support businesses' research and development efforts, we will establish an innovation tax credit to stimulate small businesses' ability to innovate. Quebec and Canadian manufacturers that make significant investments in research and development will save \$40 million as a result of this measure.

On the Conservatives' watch, Canada has fallen from 18th to 25th of 41 on companies' investment in research and development. It is clear that other countries and our number-one competitor just across the border have rather more quickly grasped the importance of investing in research and development.

In closing, I would say that this Conservative government has failed dismally when it comes to creating new jobs—stable, full-time jobs, that is.

What is more, under successive Liberal and Conservative governments, employment quality has declined considerably. According to the CIBC report, over the past 25 years, the number of poorly paid jobs rose twice as fast as the number of well-paid jobs. That is to be expected considering the kind of measures I just discussed.

In light of that failure, the NDP wants to get Canada back on track. We have a plan to create good-quality jobs in a diversified economy.

We will certainly have plenty of opportunities over the coming weeks and months to bring our proposals to the people.

● (1900)

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 585, which was moved by my colleague from Saint-Lambert. This initiative calls on the government to implement concrete measures to stimulate the manufacturing sector and support our small and medium-sized businesses.

The motion calls on the government to immediately reduce the tax rate for small and medium-sized businesses from 11% to 9%, establish an innovation tax credit, extend the accelerated capital cost allowance by two years and improve access to job training.

The proposals in this motion are part of the New Democratic Party's economic strategy to strengthen our small and medium-sized businesses so we can reduce the worrisome unemployment rate in Canada and improve employment quality, which is at a 25-year low.

We are proposing measures that focus on SMEs because Canada is a country of entrepreneurs, where small and medium-sized businesses have always been one of the key pillars of our economic system. In Canada, 99.8% of businesses are SMEs, and 98% of them

have fewer than 100 employees. They generate 40% of our annual GDP and provide 7.7 million jobs.

The entrepreneurial sector is just as important in my riding of LaSalle—Émard, where 29% of our firms and businesses are considered SMEs. Furthermore, according to Statistics Canada's Business Register, 71% of the small businesses in LaSalle employ fewer than 10 workers. They could even be described as micro-enterprises.

Following the decline of the manufacturing sector, which has affected my riding in recent decades, most SMEs now work in the services sector, particularly in retail, transportation and warehousing.

However, like most Canadians, SMEs are also struggling to make ends meet and are not operating under favourable conditions to ensure their survival. Constant changes to federal programs only present further obstacles for businesses that want to take advantage of those programs, and the lack of resources to comply with regulatory requirements only adds to the red tape that business owners have to deal with.

Another problem that exists in Quebec and across Canada is the shortage of entrepreneurial renewal. Several SMEs could be forced to shut down or move, putting many employees out of work. The services sector is especially vulnerable, since it is very competitive and sensitive to the ups and downs of the Canadian dollar and the ever-changing consumer demand.

Need I remind the House that in recent decades, over 400,000 well paying, stable jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector and that 1.3 million Canadians are currently unemployed? The situation is also troubling in my riding, where the unemployment rate is 8.2%, and 15% among young people.

Over the past four years, I have had the opportunity to meet with many store and small-business owners in LaSalle—Émard who told me about their struggles to remain financially healthy, maintain jobs and remain competitive in the current economic climate.

I also met with dozens of men and women who struggle to find work, even though they have skills and degrees, and I met with people who can only find part-time, contract, unstable and low-paying jobs. It is often young people and women who have to take these jobs. Our constituents deserve better. They deserve stable, good-quality jobs with fair compensation.

Unfortunately, the quality of the Canadian job market is at an all-time low. According to the CIBC Employment Quality Index, which measures employment quality in terms of compensation and in terms of the distribution of full- and part-time jobs, the decline in employment quality in Canada is structural.

● (1905)

This is a result of the increase in part-time jobs and the rapid growth in low-paying full-time jobs. By way of example, the study shows that last year the number of low-paying jobs increased twice as fast as the number of high-paying jobs.

We have a responsibility to respond to this situation and adopt measures that will stimulate the manufacturing sector and small and medium-sized enterprises, which have traditionally created good jobs. We must support businesses here that create jobs here at home. We must ensure that we have the right conditions to guarantee their success and sustainability. Through careful policies and its purchasing power, the government is in a position to support strategic sectors for Canada, such as the aerospace industry, high tech industries and green technology businesses specializing in the development of renewable energy and climate change adaptation. The greater Montreal area already has interesting industrial clusters in these business areas, including major players that buy from local and dynamic SMEs.

This is what the NDP leader said last week during his speech to the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal:

Montreal's economy, like that of Quebec and Canada, is made up mostly of small and medium-sized enterprises.  
...we believe in science, research and development and especially in investing responsibly in finding solutions...

Our SMEs are the key to putting the Canadian economy on the right track and creating good jobs.

I want to thank my colleague, the hon. member for Saint-Lambert for this initiative and I invite all members of the House to support this motion.

Finally, to the young people and entrepreneurs in my riding, I want to reaffirm my support for this motion, which seeks to create the conditions that will help our SMEs recover and that will create good, well-paying jobs now and in the future.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my apologies for the interruption. There have been consultations among all political parties and I think if you sought it, you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House:

- any recorded division which, at the time of the adoption of this order, stands deferred until immediately before the time provided for private members' business on Wednesday, June 17, 2015, shall be deemed to stand deferred to the conclusion of oral questions on the same day;
- if a recorded division is demanded or deemed demanded later this day, the said division shall be deemed deferred until the conclusion of oral questions on Wednesday, June 17, 2015;
- that the orders for consideration of Ways and Means Motions Nos. 25 and 26 be deemed read, the motions to concur deemed moved, the questions deemed put, and recorded divisions deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, June 17, 2015, at the conclusion of oral questions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary 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?

#### Private Members' Business

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

#### WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 25

(On the Order: Government Orders)

June 11, 2015—Consideration of a Ways and Means motion to introduce an Act to implement the accord between the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec for the joint management of petroleum resources in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and to make consequential amendments to other Acts—Minister of Natural Resources

(Motion read, motion to concur moved, question put and recorded division requested and deferred)

MOTION NO. 26

(On the Order: Government Orders)

June 12, 2015—Consideration of a Ways and Means motion to amend the Income Tax Act—The Minister of State

(Motion read, motion to concur moved, question put and recorded division requested and deferred)

\* \* \*

#### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I did not anticipate speaking to the motion, but in listening to other comments, I thought it may be appropriate for me to add a few words.

The issue of small businesses in our communities is of a critical nature for the simple reason that our small businesses are the backbone of Canada's economy. If we touch base with economists, we will find that, in looking to the future, small and medium-sized businesses are very much the drivers of Canada's economy. Therefore, we should look at opportunities to give them strength to allow them to build Canada's economy. We should look at different types of initiatives that would assist in that.

I want to focus on a couple of thoughts. One is in regard to what we had suggested as a political entity last fall, recognizing that Canadians want jobs, and the best job creators are in fact small businesses. We recognize that this is the case in every region of the country.

For example, last year the leader of the Liberal Party suggested an EI premium exemption for every worker who is hired to fill a new job in 2015 and 2016. We believe that would go a long way in supporting small and medium-sized businesses. This is something we espoused and talked about at great length.

*Private Members' Business*

There are a number of ideas for us to look into. I appreciate the motion that has been brought forward, but I want to highlight the fact that there is a multitude of ways in which government policies can assist and support small and medium-sized businesses. By supporting them, we are giving strength to Canada's economy by providing additional jobs, which is really what Canadians want to see. They want to see an economy that has a healthier middle class, an economy in which jobs are being generated. We should look wherever we can for policy initiatives that would make a difference. We would see that as a positive thing.

• (1910)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for allowing me to conclude the debate on Motion No. 585, which sets out the fundamentals of the NDP's economic recovery plan.

Canada has recorded its worst economic performance since 2009: a 0.6% recession during the first quarter of 2015. That means we need economic recovery now more than ever. I will not say any more about this worn-out government's attempts to frame our proposals as its own.

Over the past two hours, we have witnessed two economic policies collide. The Conservatives' policy is based on absolute laissez-faire. That is why they gave big businesses huge tax cuts and employers more latitude in how they treat employees and control the workforce.

After 10 years of that approach, Canadians and Quebeckers can see that it is not getting them anywhere. On the contrary, the Conservatives' approach has been totally counterproductive. It has undermined the true foundations of our economy: small and medium-sized businesses and the manufacturing sector. As a result, the middle class has suffered terribly because of job losses.

In the Montreal suburbs, where my seat is, the job losses are never-ending at Bombardier, Bell Helicopter, Electrolux, and now Pratt & Whitney right next door on the south shore.

The number of jobs is decreasing, job quality is at its lowest level in 25 years and the purchasing power of Canadian families is shrinking constantly. The closing of retail chains like Mexx, Jacob, Sears, Target and Future Shop prove this. Are we doomed to be forced into more and more precarious jobs as long as the Conservative government is in charge? Yes, without a doubt.

However, another economic policy is possible, and that is what the NDP is proposing to Canadians. Unlike the Conservatives, who spend their time reacting to the circumstances, we believe that to govern means to look ahead to the future. The NDP wants to give our economy some direction. We want to invest, innovate and train our workforce in order to stimulate economic activity, on the basis of what we consider the key to tomorrow's economy: SMEs and the manufacturing sector.

Motion No. 585 proposes restoring the tax advantage for SMEs by lowering their tax rate immediately from 11% to 10%, and then to 9%, when finances permit. In an increasingly competitive world, preparing the next generation means we must be able to innovate. That is why we want to restore the scientific research and

experimental development tax credit, which was cut by the Conservatives.

Preparing the economy of tomorrow also requires renewing the machinery in our manufacturing sector, in order to improve its competitiveness. We propose extending the accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment. Lastly, preparing the economy of tomorrow requires massive investment in job training and skills development.

For years, I worked closely with young people who were re-entering the labour market. Many wanted to relaunch their career in skilled trades. I can say that most of those trades require specialized technical skills. However, Canadian businesses have dramatically reduced how much they spend on training.

In that context, the government made the disastrous choice to cut \$300 million in transfers to the provinces for skills development with the introduction of the Canada job grant.

Conversely, the NDP is choosing a voluntary approach to raising the skill level of the workforce, which requires the broadest possible access to job training programs related to labour market development agreements.

The record is clear: the Conservatives have failed when it comes to the economy. Their rhetoric can no longer hide the reality. They have failed because of their ideological refusal to take action and plan for the future. The NDP, on the other hand, is proposing to transform our economy to ensure that everyone contributes to it and it benefits everyone. Those are two irreconcilable views of public action.

I am very proud to contribute by defending my Motion No. 585. I hope that its adoption will give hope to all my constituents who struggle to make a living.

That is why I invite all members of the House to support my motion and vote for the economic recovery we are proposing for the country.

• (1915)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. 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:*

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Pursuant to an order made earlier today, the recorded division stands deferred until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 17, 2015, after the conclusion of a question period.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from June 15 consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I do not think I will be taking my full 10 minutes, but I do want to speak in support of my colleague who has brought forward a motion which, if adopted, would see a fundamental change in the way the House elects the Speaker every time there is a new Parliament.

Currently, as most members know, the first order of business when a new Parliament begins is to elect a new Speaker.

The system we currently use is that a number of members who wish to put their names forward can do so. Actually it is a bit of an archaic procedure that members must actually inform the House if they do not want their name put forward to run for the position of Speaker. Once that has been established, the remaining candidates are allowed to make brief presentations to the entire House and then a voting process ensues.

There needs to be a 50% plus one vote of support of the entire House to be elected as the Speaker. Over the course of the last number of times that we have elected a new Speaker, it has gone anywhere from three hours to sometimes as high as 10 or 11 hours before a final determination has been made.

There seems to be two sets of arguments here either for or against the status quo. Those in favour of the status quo point to the fact that it is almost a convivial bonding moment for new members of Parliament who perhaps are unsure of exactly how Parliament works. I can imagine that a number of the members on the NDP side who were first elected in the 2011 election really had no clear idea of what to expect when they came into this place. Those who would argue in favour of the status quo say that first afternoon and evening when we elect the Speaker finally breaks down that intimidation barrier that a lot of new members face. It allows new members to interact with members on all sides of the House. It allows for some shared experiences to be told. It allows for perhaps a more convivial, less partisan approach to starting off their parliamentary careers. Others have pointed out as well that it has the excitement of a political convention that most of us have experienced at least once or twice in our political lifetimes. It is for those reasons primarily that members who are in favour of the status quo would like to see the status quo remain.

However, I am supporting a change in that system to a preferential balloting system for a very simple reason. If members are familiar

with the preferential balloting system at all, they will realize that in all likelihood, every member of this place would have either his first or second choice sitting in the Speaker's chair at the end of the voting process. There is really no chance for a compromise candidate, or perhaps better put, a candidate who no one really wants to support to begin with to take ascension to the Speaker's chair.

I think that is extremely important because I believe as far as an officer of Parliament is concerned, there is no more important position in this place than the Speaker. The Speaker is the ultimate arbiter of discussion, of debate, of disagreements. The Speaker has to be wise, has to be knowledgeable, has to be learned, has to be impartial, and more importantly, has to have the confidence of this chamber.

We have all seen in leadership conventions, as an example, there have been times when neither the favoured nor the second favoured candidate has won the leadership because it becomes an anybody but campaign, where opposing factions get together and say they will gang up and vote for a third place candidate or a compromise candidate just to ensure that candidate X is defeated. We have seen it recently and we have seen it historically where candidates who were not expected to be in contention actually walked away with the leadership of a political party.

While that may be well and good for political parties, I do not believe that should be a process that we allow to happen here. A preferential ballot would quite simply ensure that every member in this place could point to the elected Speaker and say that was either his or her first or second choice. I think that ensures confidence in the House. I think it ensures that members' wishes are respected and it also respects the integrity of this place.

For those reasons, I will be supporting my colleague and encourage all members to do likewise when the vote is taken tomorrow.

● (1920)

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the primary objection that has been raised to changing to a preferential ballot is that there is a benefit to being able to spend a day, mostly in this room and in the corridors around this room, getting to know each other as the various ballots are under way.

While I do not doubt that there was some conviviality at the time—I was there, being convivial—I have to say that my enthusiasm diminished with the hours, and I think that I reflect the views of others. It seemed to a number of us that ballots were taking longer than we might have wanted them to.

I would say that the real value of that sharing of time with one another lies in establishing an intelligent opinion on the different candidates for Speaker. I want to ask my colleague if he has any views on the system that is used in the United Kingdom for the speakership elections there. As I understand it, the House of Commons uses our system, and the House of Lords uses the same preferential ballot that I proposed in this motion.

*Routine Proceedings*

Is he aware of the fact, and what does he think about the fact, that the Hansard Society in Britain holds a series of debates between candidates for the speakership in order to give them time to express their points of view and to have members of the chamber express the concerns that they have in order to establish a mandate, in a sense, for that Speaker going forward?

What are his thoughts on that?

• (1925)

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I tend to agree. I mentioned that the election of the Speaker is probably the most important decision that new parliamentarians will make in their parliamentary lifetime. Frankly, the process that we currently have does not encourage a lot of knowledge about candidates.

We have a system under which I believe each candidate for Speaker is allowed five minutes to address the House—no, it is four minutes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that correction.

It is a very brief period of time. Many new members will be listening to a candidate for the Speaker's chair for the very first time and will have only have four minutes to determine whether that candidate is worth their vote.

I would love to see a system similar to that in the U.K. An expanded timeframe would allow each candidate for the position of Speaker to reach out to all members and try to further explain to them why he or she is perhaps the most qualified to sit in that chair.

I appreciate my colleague's comments. Frankly, the systems in use over the course of the last few centuries in the U.K. are ones to be emulated more often than not. Perhaps this is a first step in reshaping exactly how we choose a Speaker in this place.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question about the discussions that took place at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the possibility of disclosing the results of the vote each time the votes are counted and an additional round is needed to reach 50%.

I would like to know where he stands on disclosing these results, in light of the fact that it was recently agreed that the members chosen to act as deputy speaker, for example, are chosen on the basis of these results.

[English]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have a problem with the current system when it comes to the disclosure of votes, because, quite frankly, I have sometimes seen one candidate receive a very small percentage of the votes and I would not want to see that candidate embarrassed by having the vote totals disclosed.

The current system, as my hon. colleague knows, is simply that if there not a 50%-plus-1 absolute outright winner, the candidate with the fewest votes is taken off the ballot. If memory serves me well, I believe that unless a candidate receives a minimum of 5% of the total votes cast, the name of that person is also taken off of the ballot. I think that is sufficient. I do not believe that there should be the added element of disclosing the exact vote totals.

However, in a preferential ballot, we would avoid all of that because one ballot, and only one ballot, would have to be filled out. After the counting has been completed, a candidate will have been elected. That is a far simpler, far more efficient, and far more beneficial system for this place to adopt.

• (1930)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief as well. I would simply like to speak to the House about the matter before us, the adoption of the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

If the report is adopted, the committee will instruct the clerk to amend the Standing Orders accordingly. I therefore invite all my colleagues to read the 21st report of the committee, which explains in detail the changes to the Standing Orders that will be made if the report is adopted.

It is fundamental to Parliament that we discuss the election of our Speaker. After all, that person acts on behalf of the House of Commons outside Canada and receives dignitaries here. Thus, it is a very important role. That person also makes important decisions about the debates in the House. Thus, I take this debate very seriously.

The change to the Standing Orders proposed in this committee report is nonetheless significant. Although the changes to the way we vote are not fundamental, they are substantial.

As many of my colleagues know, under the current system, a candidate must obtain 50% of the votes in order to be elected. Thus, in 2011, it took several rounds to elect a Speaker. With the proposed change, we would simply use a ballot and indicate our preferences by ranking them in numerical order.

It is nevertheless an important change because, under the current rules, members can reconsider their choice after every ballot. With the system proposed today, our selection would be made as soon as we write it down on the ballot and we could not make any changes after that.

I only hope that this change will eliminate as much partisanship as possible from the election of the Speaker. The ultimate goal that we must try to achieve is to elect a Speaker who has the largest number of votes and whose election is not influenced by partisan considerations. Personally, as an MP who has a great deal of respect for the role of Speaker, I hope that we can reduce the influence of partisanship on the election of the Speaker as much as possible.

Will this new system improve our current voting process? It will be up to all of us to decide that tomorrow when it comes time to vote.

I also wanted to thank the committee members for their work. They held two meetings on this topic, on June 3 and October 2, 2014. They obviously heard from the sponsor of the motion, who brought this issue to the committee, as well as from a U.K. expert who represented the House of Lords. The committee assessed the pros and cons of the proposed system, the current system, as well as other systems that exist around the world.



*Routine Proceedings*

• (1935)

I wanted to talk about the work that the committee did. In conclusion, I remind members of the House that tomorrow's vote is very important. If the report from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs is adopted, consequential amendments will be made to the Standing Orders that govern this House. This vote should not be taken lightly. Before the vote, I urge all members to carefully read the report and the proposed change to the Standing Orders, so that they are fully informed before making this decision. I hope history will show that the House made the right decision.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I suspect there are those who have a real keen interest in rules and procedures and how the House operates, whether it is here, in provincial legislatures, or anywhere in the Commonwealth. I for one have always been fascinated by it. At times I see that we move forward in a positive way, and sometimes, unfortunately, I have seen us slip back. I am someone who really enjoys the privilege of being able to represent people, and I appreciate the opportunities that have been afforded to each and every one of us as a direct result of an election.

Engaging in debates is something I take very seriously, so when motions of this nature come forward, I always take an interest because it has to do with the functionality of what I would argue is the most important democratic institution in the land. Canada is often referred to by other Commonwealth countries as the country to turn to in terms of how our democratic system operates. I do take it very seriously.

Today has been a very interesting day for me, because the leader of my party made what I would suggest is a very progressive policy announcement that details a lot of changes in trying to fix what many perceive as a broken Ottawa, if I can put it that way.

Looking at the motion before us, which is a fairly detailed booklet, I see three points that come to my mind. One is making every vote count. What is referred to in this package is the need to change the system from first past the post and a commitment of 2015 being the last election, from a Liberal Party perspective, if it were in government, that there would be a first-past-the-post system based on what we currently have.

Another part deals with stronger parliamentary committees. That is relevant because we are talking about electing the chairs of our parliamentary system. We even have a motion on that.

Then there is another area that highlights more free votes. This is a good one for me. Even though this package or proposal is a lot more detailed, I would encourage members to read the full context of the report that was released by the Liberal Party earlier today. It deals with reform, both inside the House in Ottawa and abroad for all Canadians. What we are talking about today would be a significant change.

During the 1990s, I was in the Manitoba legislature, where Speakers were appointed. Then, in 2003, I was involved in a process where the Speaker was being elected and I can say from first-hand experience that electing a Speaker versus appointing one does make a difference. That is something I see as a very positive step forward.

What we have today does not necessarily change the fact that we are going to have an elected Speaker. The motion deals specifically with the manner in which we elect a Speaker. There are really two ways that are being talked about. There is the current system. The current system is first past the post, and that process continues until a candidate acquires the 50%-plus. This can be fairly exhausting. In the 1980s, 11 votes took place, which would indicate there were a number of hours of voting, the trade-offs, the pros, the cons, and so forth.

• (1940)

That was the system. They actually had 11 separate occasions. Members had to go and cast a ballot. They call that an exhaustive ballot, and that is what it would have been on that particular vote.

We then have what is being proposed through this motion, and that is referred to as a preferential ballot. Members vote once, but that ballot is not just a simple X beside the individual they would like to see as the Speaker; it is a listing of their choices. Members before me have given detailed explanations as to how those preferential ballots would actually be counted.

The point I would like to make is that we are fortunate that we have an elected Speaker. This is just about how we elect the Speaker. Is the current method the way to continue, or should we look at making a change?

I am a member of the procedure and House affairs committee, where it was talked about, whether by me or by the member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, who did a fantastic job, not only on PROC but also in our caucus, in making sure that everyone understood what was being proposed.

At PROC the determination was that we did not want the membership of PROC to make the decision. We felt it was more appropriate that it be made by all 308 members of the House, minus what vacancies there might be, of course. PROC did not make a recommendation to the House as to which way to vote.

As for me, I would find it difficult in terms of the status quo, but Liberal members of the House have been told that this is a free vote. I suspect that members will be consulting with others in regard to how they might vote. However, from the Liberal Party's perspective, on issues of this nature we believe there should be a free vote.

With those few words, I understand that there is a will to allow a vote to occur.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague. My question is just to make sure that this is clear and on the record, because there was one comment that suggested that a member was unsure on this point. We will be voting, formally speaking, on concurrence in report number 21 of the procedure and House affairs committee. On paper, that is what the vote will be on. However, in practice, it will be on an item of private members' business that was referred to the committee. I know that my colleague already knows that. I am commenting to make that point. He may wish to add something to that, but I just wanted to get that on the record once again.

*Routine Proceedings*

● (1945)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, just to be crystal clear, voting against concurrence in the report is to vote for the current system. If one votes no, one is saying that one wants the status quo. If one votes yes, one is saying that one wants to have the preferential ballot. That is my understanding.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to participate in the debate in the very last days of this Parliament before we adjourn for the summer.

I am supportive of the concurrence motion for the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It would be a good thing to adopt these rules for several reasons. I do not think the rule changes are revolutionary. They are quite minor rule changes. Moving from an exhaustive balloting system to a preferential balloting system for the position of Speaker is a very small change. Nevertheless, even though it is a small change, I am supporting it for a number of reasons.

First, I do not think we should be afraid of changing the Standing Orders in this place in order to continually renew and reform ourselves. Too often there is an inertia in the chamber about making changes to the Standing Orders, because many of them have been long standing. Certainly, many of the Standing Orders of the House have been long standing precisely because they have worked so well. However, in many other cases they are not working as well as they ought to, and changing the Standing Orders is something that should not be an infrequent and difficult thing to do in our Parliament.

The second reason I am supporting this is that this is present practice in the chambers of other Westminster parliaments. Therefore, we have practical, real-life, empirical evidence to see how these changes would work in practice. In the British House of Lords, the Speaker of the Lords is elected through a system of first preference votes. Therefore, we know that system works over there, so we can be assured it would work here.

However, here is the other reason I am supporting it, and it may be different from those of the other speakers who have risen to speak to this concurrence motion. The reason I think it is important to support this is that the average time it has taken to elect the Speaker in the previous number of Parliaments has been about seven hours. That is a lot of time. That could be significantly shortened through the use of a single preferential ballot, which would then allow us to reform the way in which committee members are selected in the House. I believe we have to move away from a system of standing committees, where members are selected through whips and deputy House leaders on PROC, to a system where members should be elected by the House as a whole, by their peers in the House, to committees at the beginning of each Parliament.

If we were to do that, that first day of the sitting of Parliament would be the ideal time not only to elect the Speaker of the Chamber but also to elect members to the 24 standing committees of this Chamber. Then in turn, when those standing committees meet for the first time, they could elect the chair of their committee. In doing that, we would create more independent committees of this place that would function in a better manner than they do today. However, in order to arrive at that system where members of Parliament vote for

committee members, we need to vote for the Speaker in a more efficient manner.

That is the other reason I am supporting this. I think having a super day of voting on the first day of a Parliament after a general election, a super day of voting in the House of Commons, would allow us to reform other rules in the Standing Orders and allow us to do it in an efficient manner.

I want to commend my colleague on PROC for championing this idea. It would be a good change, which the House should support. It would lead to improvements in the way we elect Speakers and particularly to a much shorter time dedicated to the election of Speaker. At the same time, it would allow us to consider other amendments to the Standing Orders that would allow us to move away from the way committee members are selected now, which is essentially through the power of party leaders, to a system where members of Parliament, all 338 of us, would come together and also determine which of our peers would sit on the respective 24 standing committees.

● (1950)

I encourage members on both sides of the aisle to support this change. As I said, it is not a revolutionary change, but I think it would lead to more efficient voting and an opportunity for us to consider other votes for other matters on that first day that we sit as a House of Commons.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for those comments. I would point out to him that this very day the procedure and House affairs committee was looking at the subject matter he is referring to. That might be of some interest to him.

I would like to ask him about a different subject which is on the issue regarding the hustings that the Hansard Society puts on in the United Kingdom for candidates for the speakership.

I know that my colleague very much admires the Westminster Parliament. I think we all do, but some of us admire it in a vague sort of way while others have a more precise knowledge which has increased their admiration for that place and its way of handling things.

I would ask my colleague what he thinks of the idea of a hustings in which candidates for the speakership would have a chance both to explain what they plan to do as the Speaker, as well as get feedback, in a sense, of what kind of consensus may exist among the new members of Parliament, or the new Parliament itself, as to how they ought to behave in the role of Speaker following the Speaker's election.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, I like the idea of a hustings debate that would take place before the election of Speaker. We could perhaps hold it in the Reading Room or in the Railway Room, as opposed to the Brits, who hold it in Westminster Hall. It would be a better opportunity for members to ask more detailed questions of candidates for Speaker about what they are proposing to do.

It is necessary as well to have more debate on who would be the Speaker of this House, not in a formal setting of the House of Commons but maybe in one of the committee rooms that we have here on Parliament Hill. There in a more informal setting members could ask questions of prospective candidates for Speaker.

I believe that the role of Speaker is evolving. It is moving away from a more ceremonial role and is rapidly evolving in a House of Commons that is itself rapidly changing. There is increasing desire for reform of question period, reform of the way in which debates are conducted, and reform of the various daily proceedings of the House of Commons, so Speakers will increasingly need to state their positions and views on the evolution of our conventions in this House of Commons. Having a venue where members of Parliament can ask the candidates for Speaker where they stand on these various issues in greater detail is very important.

I would add that the Speaker's role needs to be strengthened. I for one believe that the Speaker should appoint the Clerk of the House of Commons. Currently, in effect, the Prime Minister appoints the Clerk of the House of Commons. I believe that is an undue intrusion of the executive branch of government into the legislature.

I also believe that the Speaker should be appointing the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons. Currently the Prime Minister in effect appoints the Sergeant-at-Arms, so clearly there are a number of other changes that we need to strengthen the division of powers between the executive and the legislative branches of government. I think many of these changes would require Speakers to state their position and the way forward for these types of reforms.

Some of them may be achieved through Standing Order changes and some of them may be achieved through a different reading of the Standing Orders. Some of them may be achieved through new conventions that are established by the members of this place in concert with the Speaker's ruling. Therefore, as we move to a future Parliament that I hope will renew and reform itself, I think it will become more and more important for members of this place to have a better understanding of where the various candidates stand on the issues.

Currently the way our system works with the exhaustive balloting system does not afford members of Parliament a great deal of opportunity to hear the various candidates speak on the various issues because there is often a limited amount of time for each candidate for Speaker to rise in this place and state his or her vision or view on where the House of Commons should go.

I will conclude by saying that what I hope we achieve in future Parliaments will be a series of first days of Parliament on which we have a series of discussions, not only on the floor of this House of Commons but also in party caucuses, about how we would govern ourselves for the life of that Parliament. I hope that eventually we will have a Parliament and a House of Commons where that debate takes place ahead of the first day of voting for the Speaker and where, in an informal session, members of Parliament can ask the various candidates for Speaker where they stand on the various issues. I hope it can take place here in the House when we first vote on a preferential ballot for Speaker and hopefully eventually vote for committee members.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

If the reform act passes, I also hope those discussions will take place in the first meetings of party caucuses, where members of caucuses can come together and debate how caucuses are to be governed, how chairs of caucuses are to be elected, how members are to be expelled and readmitted, how party leaders are to be reviewed and removed, and how interim leaders are to be elected in the event of a sudden resignation, incapacity, death, or removal.

● (1955)

I thank my colleague for that question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Resuming debate.

Accordingly, pursuant to an order made earlier today, the question is deemed put and a recorded division is deemed requested.

Also, pursuant to an order made earlier today, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 17, 2015 at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

---

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

### RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am sad to report that VIA Rail is dying in the hands of the government. The results contained in VIA's annual report are abysmal. By virtually every measure, VIA is continuing a nose-down descent. Revenue is up slightly, but operating loss is climbing faster. Ridership, cost recovery and on-time performances are all dropping dangerously, but for many reasons they could be fixed, if we cared, if we chose to.

Canada is alone among the G8 nations in having no national transportation policy or strategy. We have cobbled together a hodgepodge of policies that lack coherence. When we expand our highway system, it is always called a critical investment. When we talk about passenger rail and the need for investment in that critical infrastructure, it is described as an endless subsidy.

Canadian innovators in modern rail, like Bombardier, sell their fast and efficient trains to other nations, while our passenger rail system continues to decline and decay. For example, VIA's program to rebuild the more than 30-year-old cars that are the backbone of VIA's Quebec-Windsor corridor operation was slated to cost about \$99 billion with completion in 2013. This is 2015. Project costs have nearly doubled, and now will not wrap up until 2017.

Canada's passenger rail service has no legislative framework. VIA is crippled by inadequate investment and a lack of enlightened national rail policy favouring more, not less service.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The government is failing to improve our publicly owned passenger trains at a time when other nations are modernizing and expanding their systems. The Conservatives are deliberately starving VIA and are not giving it the modern tools to turn itself around as the U.S. Congress has given to Amtrak.

The government claims to be business savvy, but I see zero business smarts at work in their mismanagement of VIA. I observe waste and decay at the expense of Canadian taxpayer dollars or phony excuses about how VIA is supposedly, allegedly an arm's-length crown corporation that makes its own decisions.

In 2012, the government cut \$41 million from VIA's annual operation. The Canadian, the country's only cross-country route, was cut from three trains a week to only two from October to April of each year. The Ocean, VIA's Montreal to Halifax route, was reduced from six times weekly to only three at that time, cutting VIA service to Atlantic Canada in half.

The cancellation of half the VIA route network and the abysmal treatment of our national rail passenger service can be brought down to one overarching problem: the total absence of a logical visionary passenger rail policy for Canada.

The fate of Canada's rail passenger system is hanging in the balance today. Misunderstood, underfunded and seemingly without a powerful champion in Ottawa, other than me, VIA still represents an important national resource and can and should be put on a firm footing that it has always required, but time is growing short. If we lose what remains of our rail passenger system, we will stand alone among the G8, among the G20 group of nations.

There are two no-cost steps that could kick-start VIA's revival. The first is legislation like that introduced by a private member from the NDP recently and voted down by the Conservatives to establish VIA's mandate, rights, obligations and relationship with respect to the exorbitant user fees of freight railways.

VIA has never had such legislation. This has always been at the heart of Amtrak's survival and success in the U.S.A.

As I finish, the other way to get VIA back on track without spending scarce public dollars is by filling the two vacancies on VIA's board with people who actually understand VIA and care.

Would the minister please consider appointing former Amtrak president and Cape Breton resident David Gunn to our Canadian VIA board?

• (2000)

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where to begin on that one. Let me start with some of the items the member raised in that self-congratulatory, yet rambling, litany of things he threw down.

First of all, the private member's bill introduced by the official opposition, which was rightly opposed by this government, was an attempt to ensure that rather than VIA operating as a business, the business of VIA would be run from the floor of the House of Commons, particularly when it came to route selection. There were a number of other important reasons why that was not functional at all.

I know that the member likes to talk about investment in VIA Rail. When it came to improving and making significant capital investments of about \$1 billion, I do not remember the member standing in the House and actually voting to support that.

When it comes to annual operational investments, we have opportunities in the main estimates and everything else to support appropriations to VIA Rail. It makes the support sound hollow by the member opposite when he cannot stand in his place and support estimates for it.

When it comes to the appointment process, as is the case with all crown corporations, appointments to the board of directors of VIA Rail follow open, transparent, and competency-based selection processes that reflect the specific nature of the positions and the weight of their responsibilities.

Full- and part-time Governor in Council leadership positions follow a comprehensive selection process that includes the development of selection criteria that outline the qualifications required for the position. They are advertised in the *Canada Gazette*, on the federal government's appointments website, and on the public institution's own website.

A pool of candidates can also be established through a variety of other means, such as through executive search firms, newspapers, and professional journals. Interested candidates are assessed based on the requirements of the position. Further to the interview of the qualified candidates, reference checks are conducted.

Interested candidates for part-time director positions should forward their *curriculum vitae* to the office of the Minister of Transport.

For full-time leadership positions, recruitment processes are led by the Privy Council Office, which would be instructive for the member opposite, and interested candidates can apply upon publication of a notice of vacancy in the *Canada Gazette* and on the Governor in Council appointments website.

The appointment process, I will remind the member, has been significantly strengthened, ensuring that all appointments are competency based. That is a commitment we continue to follow and improve upon.

• (2005)

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** Mr. Speaker, VIA needs a responsible government that leads and cares about effective passenger rail and board members who have knowledge, experience, and an informed passion for actually improving, not killing, privatizing, or declining passenger rail.

I fully supported the excellent VIA Rail Canada act tabled earlier this year by the NDP MP for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. It dealt with the necessity of passenger priority over freight and the reduction of the outrageous track-use charges to VIA by CP Rail and CN Rail, and it called for a basic national network alterable only by Parliament, not just by the Prime Minister.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Now it is time to get VIA back on track in a new way. VIA's board needs former Amtrak president David Gunn, a man who has real-world railway experience and the ability to actually save VIA. Therefore, I ask again, will the minister consider appointing Cape Breton resident David Gunn to our VIA board?

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, maybe the member wishes he were back in the NDP. I do not know what to make of that last intervention.

What VIA needs is very simple. It needs the independence to operate as a crown corporation and to take care of its day-to-day operations and affairs. It does not need the House of Commons running its day-to-day affairs, and it certainly does not need the rhetoric of the member opposite. He should put his mouth and his votes where the money actually is with VIA and stand and support the estimates and the budgets we put forward that make sure that VIA is a successful crown corporation.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in adjournment proceedings to pursue a question I initially asked on April 30.

Tragically, and I do believe it is a tragedy for our country, the subject of my question, the so-called anti-terrorism act, Bill C-51, has now passed the House under time allocation. It was pushed through without adequate study. It has also been passed in the Senate of our country. I do believe the Senate has a role for sober second thought and it should have put forward amendments, and those amendments should have come back to the House for further consideration.

However, as it happens, my opportunity to pursue the question that I had asked on April 30 comes today on June 16, so I will pursue it in the interest of public education and perhaps even the education of members opposite.

There are many critical issues before us in Bill C-51 such as the infringement on our civil liberties, while simultaneously making us less safe, less able to anticipate, interrupt and prevent terrorist attacks. A bill that makes us less safe while destroying our Charter of Rights and Freedoms is quite an accomplishment, if one takes a dark view of things. However, the question I asked back on April 30 related in a very straightforward fashion to terminology used by the Minister of Public Safety.

There has been an attempt throughout the sales job on Bill C-51 to tell us that it includes the concept of oversight. Moreover, the Minister of Public Safety claimed that it includes judicial oversight. In fact, it includes no such thing.

In the time remaining, I hope to set out what I have learned about judicial oversight, review and warrant provisions from many expert witnesses who testified before the House and the Senate, and drawing on my own background as a practising lawyer.

The reality is that Canada has no parliamentary oversight of security operations. There is no actual oversight of any security operations and less review than any other country within our Five Eyes partners.

The question I asked on April 30 was answered, or at least responded to, by the government House leader who said, "We chose to have judges review these matters rather than politicians". He claims that there is judicial oversight because there is a requirement for a CSIS agent, under part 4 of the bill, to get a warrant from a Federal Court judge before breaking our domestic laws or violating our charter rights. It is an extraordinary provision.

Legal experts, such as Professor Craig Forcese and Professor Kent Roach, described that provision in part 4 as a "constitutional breach warrant". It is unheard of in any democracy around the world to be able to go to a Federal Court judge in a private, secret hearing, with no public advocates such as the special advocates that we have in the case of security certificates. No public interest representation is in the room, just the CSIS agents, a Federal Court judge and a demand for a warrant.

What are these various terms?

"Review" is what the Security Intelligence Review Committee does. It is made up of a series of people, part-time, who meet infrequently to review what has already happened. In the case of the Canadian Border Services, it does not have review oversight or oversight. The RCMP has a public complaints commission that allows complaints to be heard, but no actual oversight. CSIS, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, has no oversight or review.

An expert on security from the U.K., Mr. Fogarty, an MI5 agent, spoke to the Senate and said that when asked by his U.K. colleagues what they would copy in the U.K. from the Canadian security system, he replied that he would urge that they not copy a single thing because Canada's security system was a disaster waiting to happen.

● (2010)

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for allowing me to clarify some important matters regarding Bill C-51 and the changes it would bring to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. It is a piece of legislation I would encourage that member and all members to be supporting.

As the members of the House are aware, Bill C-51 would give CSIS a clear new mandate to disrupt threats to the security of Canada at home and abroad. This mandate would include a number of safeguards to ensure that CSIS operations respect the rule of law and the charter.

For example, the bill sets out that all measures taken against threats to the security of Canada be reasonable and proportional in the circumstances, and before CSIS could take any measure that would normally be contrary to Canadian law or that would affect charter rights, CSIS would have to obtain a court warrant.

The warrant process for threat disruption in Bill C-51 is built closely on the existing CSIS warrant system. This system has successfully protected the rights of Canadians since the creation of CSIS in 1984.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The hon. member stated that issuing warrants is not the same as judicial oversight. We respectfully disagree. The hon. member may not be aware of just how much information is put before judges when CSIS applies for a warrant. Judges receive extensive documentation describing the threat to the security of Canada and exactly how CSIS proposes to address that threat. They can then ask questions and place any conditions on CSIS they deem to be in the public interest.

For these reasons, the warrant process is an effective, time-tested form of judicial oversight. It gives impartial legal experts, not politicians, the final decision on sensitive CSIS operations.

I would note that the safeguards set out in Bill C-51 go beyond those placed on many allied intelligence services. Not every country has a stringent system of court warrants for intelligence work.

I would also remind members that all CSIS operations remain subject to review by the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC. Indeed, the recent budget doubled SIRC's resources, giving it the means to keep on top of the new and existing mandates of CSIS.

Bill C-51 would also create specific new reporting requirements for SIRC that would ensure Parliament is kept apprised of the disruptive activities that may be undertaken by CSIS.

The combination of independent review and judicial oversight in Bill C-51 would make certain that CSIS uses its new mandate in a lawful and responsible manner.

● (2015)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I would urge any hon. member in this place who is genuinely interested in understanding what oversight means to read the hundreds of pages of legal evidence prepared by professors Forcese and Kent Roach, which makes it abundantly clear that, with all due respect to my colleague the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport—and of course this is not his file—there is absolutely no connection between granting a warrant and judicial oversight.

It is like saying, “Look here: she is demanding we provide a horse, but we have this perfectly adequate pig over here.” We are talking

about different species of activities. There is no connection. There is no overlap. We are talking about apples and oranges, and they are relying on apples.

What we need is oversight. We need to ensure pinnacle oversight. As the former chief justice of our supreme court John Major, who headed the Air India inquiry, said, this bill should not be passed without a security advisor to the Prime Minister. He said we need a national security advisor to be sure that the RCMP tells CSIS what it is doing, that CSIS tells the RCMP what it is doing, and in this whole mess that somebody has oversight, because right now, we have the weakest review and the weakest oversight of any country in the Five Eyes.

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, the only disconnect is with the member over there. What is clear is that jihadi terrorists have declared war on Canada, and our government has acted to ensure the safety and security of Canadians.

Oversight and independent review are key safeguards that, together, will ensure CSIS takes appropriate action against threats to the security of Canada.

The bill would require CSIS to get a court warrant whenever it needs special authorities to disrupt a threat to the security of Canada. In this way, the courts would provide independent judicial oversight of CSIS operations. In addition, CSIS activities would remain subject to independent review.

With the robust safeguards in the proposed legislation, Canadians can continue to rely on CSIS to protect our national security in a manner consistent with the law and with Canadian values. We take seriously the first priority of a government, and that is to protect its citizens and maintain public security.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:18 p.m.)







# CONTENTS

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

<b>Information Commissioner of Canada</b>	
The Speaker .....	15115
<b>Government Response to Petitions</b>	
Mr. Lukiwski .....	15115
<b>Dangerous and Impaired Driving Act</b>	
Mr. MacKay .....	15115
Bill C-73. Introduction and first reading .....	15115
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	15115
<b>Interparliamentary Delegations</b>	
Mr. Tilson .....	15115
<b>Committees of the House</b>	
<b>Citizenship and Immigration</b>	
Mr. Tilson .....	15115
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe .....	15115
<b>Corrections and Conditional Release Act</b>	
Mr. Payne .....	15115
Bill C-693. Introduction and first reading .....	15115
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	15116
<b>Navigation Protection Act</b>	
Ms. Crowder .....	15116
Bill C-694. Introduction and first reading .....	15116
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	15116
<b>Petitions</b>	
<b>Impaired Driving</b>	
Mr. Warawa .....	15116
<b>Agriculture</b>	
Mr. Plamondon .....	15116
<b>Lac-Mégantic</b>	
Mr. Plamondon .....	15116
<b>Violence Against Women</b>	
Ms. Péclet .....	15116
<b>Metric System</b>	
Ms. Péclet .....	15117
<b>Agriculture</b>	
Mr. MacAulay .....	15117
<b>Citizenship and Immigration</b>	
Mr. Kent .....	15117
<b>Drugs Prescribed to Children</b>	
Mr. Kent .....	15117
<b>Canada Post</b>	
Ms. Freeman .....	15117
<b>Optimist Movement</b>	
Ms. Quach .....	15117
<b>The Environment</b>	
Ms. Quach .....	15117

<b>Canada Post</b>	
Ms. Quach .....	15117
<b>CBC/Radio-Canada</b>	
Ms. Quach .....	15117
<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>	
Mr. Lukiwski .....	15117
<b>Questions Passed as Orders for Returns</b>	
Mr. Lukiwski .....	15118

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

<b>Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act</b>	
Mr. Alexander .....	15121
Bill S-7. Third reading .....	15121
Ms. Péclet .....	15123
Mr. Lamoureux .....	15124
Mr. Opitz .....	15124
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe .....	15125
Mr. Menegakis .....	15127
Ms. Freeman .....	15128
Mr. Menegakis .....	15128
<b>Business of the House</b>	
Mr. Wallace .....	15129
Motion .....	15129
(Motion agreed to) .....	15129
<b>Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act</b>	
Bill S-7. Third reading .....	15129
Mr. McCallum .....	15129
Mr. Menegakis .....	15130
Mr. Nantel .....	15130
Mr. Menegakis .....	15131
Mr. Dubé .....	15133
Mr. Albrecht .....	15133
Ms. Doré Lefebvre .....	15134
Ms. Mathysen .....	15134
Mr. Angus .....	15136
Mr. Wallace .....	15136
Mr. Dubé .....	15137
Mr. Nantel .....	15138
Ms. Borg .....	15138
Mrs. Smith .....	15138
Ms. Michaud .....	15140
Ms. Péclet .....	15140
Ms. Young (Vancouver South) .....	15140
Mr. Godin .....	15142
Mr. Vaughan .....	15142
Ms. Freeman .....	15142
Mrs. Ablonczy .....	15144
Mr. Vaughan .....	15144
Mr. Davies (Vancouver Kingsway) .....	15144
Mr. Nantel .....	15146
Ms. Doré Lefebvre .....	15146

Mr. Gosal.....	15147
Ms. Péclet.....	15148
Mr. Lamoureux.....	15148
Mr. Menegakis.....	15148
Mr. Richards.....	15149

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Abenaki Museum

Mr. Plamondon.....	15149
--------------------	-------

### Prairie Gleaners Society

Mr. Payne.....	15150
----------------	-------

### Canadian Interuniversity Sport

Mr. Masse.....	15150
----------------	-------

### Magna Carta

Mr. Anders.....	15150
-----------------	-------

### Dick MacLean

Mr. MacAulay.....	15150
-------------------	-------

### Calgary

Mr. Obhrai.....	15150
-----------------	-------

### Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Nunez-Melo.....	15151
---------------------	-------

### Highway of Heroes Challenge Cup

Mrs. Perkins.....	15151
-------------------	-------

### Jewish National Fund

Mr. Kent.....	15151
---------------	-------

### Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles

Mrs. Day.....	15151
---------------	-------

### Marijuana

Mr. Young (Oakville).....	15152
---------------------------	-------

### Civic Engagement

Mr. Côté.....	15152
---------------	-------

### Taxation

Mr. McColeman.....	15152
--------------------	-------

### Democratic Reform

Ms. Murray.....	15152
-----------------	-------

### Taxation

Mr. Albrecht.....	15152
-------------------	-------

### 42nd General Election

Ms. Sims.....	15153
---------------	-------

### Canada-Poland Relations

Mr. Lizon.....	15153
----------------	-------

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### The Economy

Ms. Leslie.....	15153
Mr. Harper.....	15153
Ms. Leslie.....	15153
Mr. Harper.....	15153
Ms. Leslie.....	15153
Mr. Harper.....	15154

### Government Policies

Mr. Julian.....	15154
Mr. Blaney.....	15154
Mr. Julian.....	15154
Mr. Blaney.....	15154

### Public Safety

Mr. Goodale.....	15154
Mr. Harper.....	15154
Mr. Goodale.....	15154
Mr. Harper.....	15155
Mr. Dion.....	15155
Mr. Harper.....	15155

### Employment

Ms. Mathysen.....	15155
Mr. Poilievre.....	15155
Mrs. Groguhé.....	15155
Mr. Poilievre.....	15155

### Public Safety

Ms. Boivin.....	15155
Mr. Blaney.....	15155

### Justice

Ms. Boivin.....	15156
Mr. MacKay.....	15156
Mr. Garrison.....	15156
Mr. MacKay.....	15156
Mr. Angus.....	15156
Mr. MacKay.....	15156

### Parliamentary Precinct

Mr. Angus.....	15156
Mr. Warkentin.....	15157
Mr. Boulerice.....	15157
Mr. Warkentin.....	15157

### Justice

Mr. Boulerice.....	15157
Mr. MacKay.....	15157

### Democratic Reform

Mr. Simms.....	15157
Mr. Albas.....	15157
Ms. Murray.....	15157
Mr. Poilievre.....	15158

### Canada Revenue Agency

Mr. Dubourg.....	15158
Ms. Findlay.....	15158

### Science and Technology

Mr. Stewart.....	15158
Mr. Holder.....	15158
Ms. Liu.....	15158
Mr. Holder.....	15158

### Aerospace Industry

Ms. Quach.....	15158
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam).....	15159
Ms. Charlton.....	15159
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam).....	15159

<b>Taxation</b>	
Mrs. Perkins .....	15159
Mr. Sorenson .....	15159
<b>Citizenship and Immigration</b>	
Mr. Davies (Vancouver Kingsway) .....	15159
Mr. Alexander .....	15159
Mr. Davies (Vancouver Kingsway) .....	15159
Mr. Alexander .....	15160
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe .....	15160
Mr. Alexander .....	15160
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe .....	15160
Mr. Alexander .....	15160
<b>Committees of the House</b>	
Ms. Bennett .....	15160
Mr. Van Loan .....	15160
<b>Science and Technology</b>	
Mr. Garneau .....	15160
Mr. Holder .....	15160
<b>Aboriginal Affairs</b>	
Mrs. Hughes .....	15161
Mr. Valcourt .....	15161
Ms. Ashton .....	15161
Mr. Valcourt .....	15161
<b>Veterans Affairs</b>	
Mr. Chisu .....	15161
Mr. O'Toole .....	15161
<b>Social Development</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	15161
<b>The Environment</b>	
Mr. Côté .....	15161
Ms. Raitt .....	15161
<b>Health</b>	
Ms. Young (Vancouver South) .....	15161
Ms. Ambrose .....	15162
<b>Intergovernmental Affairs</b>	
Mr. Plamondon .....	15162
Mr. Van Loan .....	15162
<b>Justice</b>	
Mr. Bellavance .....	15162
Mr. MacKay .....	15162

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

<b>Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act</b>	
Bill S-7. Third reading .....	15162
Mr. Richards .....	15162
Mr. Côté .....	15163
<b>Points of Order</b>	
<b>Oral Questions</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	15164
Mr. Van Loan .....	15164
<b>Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act</b>	
Bill S-7. Third reading .....	15165
Mr. Sandhu .....	15165

Mr. Lamoureux .....	15166
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard) .....	15166
Mrs. Ambler .....	15166
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard) .....	15167
Ms. Ayala .....	15168
Mr. Shory .....	15168
Mr. Shory .....	15168
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard) .....	15169
Mr. Lamoureux .....	15170
Mrs. Ambler .....	15170
Ms. May .....	15171
Ms. Quach .....	15172
Ms. Leitch .....	15172
Mr. Morin (Laurentides—Labelle) .....	15173
Mr. Shory .....	15174
Mr. Leung .....	15174
Ms. Sims .....	15175
Mr. Lamoureux .....	15175
Mr. Côté .....	15175
Mr. Wallace .....	15176
Mr. Lamoureux .....	15177
Ms. Liu .....	15177
Motion agreed to .....	15179
(Bill read the third time and passed) .....	15179

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

<b>Missing Aboriginal Women</b>	
Motion .....	15179
Ms. Jones .....	15179
Mr. Strahl .....	15180
Ms. Ashton .....	15182
Mr. Rankin .....	15183
Ms. Bennett .....	15185
Division deferred .....	15185
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	
Motion .....	15185
Mr. Adler .....	15186
Mr. Aubin .....	15187
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard) .....	15188
<b>Business of the House</b>	
Mr. Lukiwski .....	15189
Motion .....	15189
(Motion agreed to) .....	15189
<b>Ways and Means</b>	
<b>Motion No. 25</b>	
(On the Order: Government Orders) .....	15189
(Motion read, motion to concur moved, question put and recorded division requested and deferred) .....	15189
<b>Motion No. 26</b>	
(On the Order: Government Orders) .....	15189
(Motion read, motion to concur moved, question put and recorded division requested and deferred) .....	15189
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	
Motion .....	15189
Mr. Lamoureux .....	15189
Mrs. Groguhé .....	15190

Division on motion deferred ..... 15191

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**Committees of the House**

**Procedure and House Affairs**

Motion for concurrence ..... 15191  
Mr. Lukiwski ..... 15191  
Mr. Reid ..... 15191  
Mr. Dusseault ..... 15192  
Mr. Dusseault ..... 15192  
Mr. Lamoureux ..... 15193  
Mr. Reid ..... 15193

Mr. Chong ..... 15194

Mr. Reid ..... 15194

Division on motion deferred ..... 15195

**ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

**Rail Transportation**

Mr. Hyer ..... 15195

Mr. Watson ..... 15196

**Public Safety**

Ms. May ..... 15197

Mr. Watson ..... 15197



Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>